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INCIDENTS OF INDIAN LIFE

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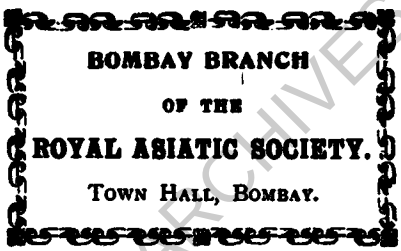

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INCIDENTS

OF

INDIAN LIFE.

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BY

JOHN CAVE-BROWNE, M.A.,

VICAR OF DETLING, KENT,

Formerly Chaplain in the Honble. East Indian Company's Service.

[AUTHOR OF "THE PUNJAB AND DELHI IN 1857," &C.]

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TO

HIS PARISHIONERS AND NEIGHBOURS,

IN A PEACEFUL KENTISH VILLAGE,

THESE SKETCHES

OF

STIRRING SCENES,

(SOME OF THEM INDEED MEMORIES)

IN A DISTANT AND VERY DIFFERENT LAND,

ARE OFFERED,

IN CONNECTION WITH THEIR SECOND

VILLAGE INDUSTRIAL EXHIBITION,

WITH

THE SINCERE REGARD

OF THEIR PASTOR AND FRIEND

JOHN CAVE-BROWNE.

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PREFACE.

THE following Stories have (with one exception) already appeared, some years since, in the pages of different Periodicals. They originated in a suggestion made to the writer by the late Dr. Norman Macleod, under whose auspices several of them first saw the light in "Good Words." They are now presented in a collected form, at the request of friends with whose expressed wish he felt bound to comply, and are offered as his contribution to a Village "Industrial Exhibition," in which he is personally interested. Any profits which may arise from the sale of this little volume will be given to the "DETLING CHURCH IMPROVEMENT FUND."

It has been suggested that they should be called "*Memories*" or "*Reminiscences;*" but neither would have been a strictly correct Title, as several of the events to which they refer, and on which they are based, occurred some years before his Indian life as a Chaplain commenced. He would however here state that whatever there may be of fiction or imagination blended in the tales, there is in each case a foundation of fact. For instance, in the first Story, the "Forlorn Hope" was led, and the Capture of the Rajah was effected, as here described. The same may be said of the many feverish nights passed by the young Officer in the poor Paharri's hut, and the

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sale of his Property under the belief that he was killed. Again, the "Fort Ditch was Plumbed," and the Gate of Ghuzni blown in with a bag of gunpowder, as here described. In the minor details, conversations, &c. the writer has availed himself of the licence always allowed to a "Story-Teller," and he hopes he will not be considered to have exceeded bounds.

He feels that he ought perhaps to qualify the foregoing remarks with reference to three of the Stories. The "Adventure with a Buffalo" had no foundation in fact. It was an imaginary incident, but a very possible one, and only conceived in order to pourtray the character of a dear young friend. While the "A Night and a Day on the Frontier" and the "Civilian in Camp," are a grouping together of isolated incidents well known as having occurred in the Punjab.

Published Journals, personal narratives, and Regimental Mess traditions, have helped to supply the facts he has here made use of; a special interest attaching to them from his having been more or less intimately acquainted with the chief actor in each adventure.

The object which the writer has had in view in each and all of the Stories is to bear his testimony to the fact that, as Englishmen never lose their innate manliness and courage in India, so amid all the excitement and enjoyment of an Indian life there may generally be detected, if not always on the surface, the presence of an undercurrent of religious feeling, of which the writer can thankfully testify to a perceptible and a deepening spread of late years.

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A FORLORN HOPE;

AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

A Tale of the Pindharri War.

CHAPTER I.

THE ASSAULT.

FLASH! Flash! Bo-o-o-o-m! Bo-o-o-o-m-m-m! How the eye kindles and the heart beats at the sound of the first shot which announces that a cannonade has really begun! And yet a few hours—minutes almost—and the eye will watch, and the ear listen, with pulse well nigh restored to its wonted beat; and the mind become so familiarised to the sound, as to contemplate the scene with comparative composure.

Flash! flash! boom! boom! had been the order of the day for some six-and-thirty hours: a brisk ceaseless cannonade had been going on under a ceaseless downpour—such as during the cold weather Rains

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often ushers in Christmas-tide in India—when the scene of our story opens.

It was before the City of Nagpore. The Mahratta Rajah was already a prisoner in the English Camp; but the City itself was still in the hands of his troops, and a body of hireling Arabs.

There was no regular siege train with the camp; but the morning before had seen a few small field pieces pushed forward on a *bund*, or embankment of a lake, within short range of the Main Gateway of the City; embrasures had been cut, and the guns were being worked under cover of a low wall, which served as a breastwork, running along the outer edge of the *bund*.

Night was closing in—the night of December 23rd, 1817; each flash threw back a weird glow over the lake behind; the improvised breastwork shook with each boom of the guns, while under its cover were moving along the three detachments, Engineers, European and Native Infantry, which with the morning's dawn were to form the assaulting party. For it was pronounced that the steady close fire of even these small pieces had sufficiently battered and breached the Main Gateway and its adjacent curtains to justify the assault being delivered.

The three officers who were to lead the several detachments—the three, whom the coming "Forlorn Hope" was "to crown with glory or a grave"—stood talking together; Lieutenant Davis, who was to lead his Sappers first into the breach; Captain Bell, who

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was to follow with his Company of Royal Scots; and Captain Brown, who was to bring up his Grenadier and 2nd Companies of the 22nd Bengal Native Infantry in reserve.

Strange as it may appear, these three men, who seemed to be marching to certain death—for in those days (more than sixty years ago) a "Forlorn Hope" presented even a more forlorn and hopeless prospect than an assault now-a-days, when Engineering skill and heavy Ordnance have been brought to so high a state of perfection—these men were objects of general envy among their brother officers.

Indeed Captain Brown, who had been married only a few months, had been importuned by several of his bachelor comrades to let them take his place; an exchange by no means unknown, or in any way regarded as dishonourable, at a time when married men were comparatively few, and the poor wives, and probable widows, were objects of so much pity during a campaign. But he had decidedly, though kindly, declined them all.

"I say, Davis," said Captain Bell, "you'll have the first pick of the diamonds, you lucky fellow! Wax your fingers well, to make sure of them; and let us all three go shares." "Brown" (he said, turning to the third of the party), "I hope this drenching rain won't wash all the pluck out of your Sepoys. I trust they'll follow up well, and not leave us in the lurch at the top of the breach."

"No fear of that, I think," said Captain Brown

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very quietly. "I certainly could have wished them a more favourable chance of showing their Rajpoot breeding; for though I say it, and that to a King's Officer," (and a slight tone of pique was perceptible in his voice), "they are as fine a set of fellows as ever wore uniform."

"Of course," put in young Davis, who saw that the 'Sepoy Officer' (as they used to call those in Native Regiments) was a little galled at the speech of the 'King's man'—"of course, you gallant Scots don't mind a little moisture. I fancy it's the normal state of your country, isn't it?"

"Well," said Captain Brown, gravely, "a 'Forlorn Hope' is no subject for a joke, nor is this, to my mind, any time for it. Only let us each do his best, and support one another; and all look to Him, in whose hands after all is the issue."

In these few passing words may be traced the characters of the three men. They parted; to meet again at day break, when the assault was to be made.

But the heavy rain during the whole night had somewhat retarded matters; and it was nearly noon before the signal for the advance was given; the detachments meanwhile, officers and men, as they stood behind the *bund*, were drenched to the skin.

At length the order came! Out they sprang from under cover; the Sappers first, then the Scots, and lastly the Sepoys.

A few minutes, and the Sappers were in the breach. So unprepared were the Arab sentries, that

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they were found sitting under shelter from the rain, leisurely smoking their *hookahs*. The Sappers were upon them, and at that moment the Gateway was in their hands, if only the supports had come up. Unfortunately the Scots hesitated; and though they quickly rallied and advanced, the delay proved fatal. The Arabs had recovered themselves; and by the time the Scots had breasted the breach, a withering volley met them; a panic seized them; they turned, and rushed down the breach again, leaving to his fate their Captain, who stood vainly trying to rally them with entreaties and reproaches, himself nobly scorning to fall back.

Captain Brown saw the danger, and called on his Sepoys to advance. They pushed forward: but were borne down by the retreating Europeans;—what they would not do themselves, others should not do.

Seeing Bell still standing on the top of the breach, Captain Brown sprang forward to his side, hoping thus to draw on his own men, and even yet to turn the tide. But it was too late! it was all in vain; the day was lost!

Bell soon fell, shot through the forehead; Davis lay severely wounded inside the breach; and Captain Brown remained alone unhurt, the mark of a hundred matchlocks! He calmly seated himself on a fragment of the wall. The bullets whistled past him, or thudded against the wall at his back, and fell flattened at his feet. Three had pierced his shako; one had grazed his epaulette; but he himself was still untouched; he seemed to carry a charmed life.

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The enemy were awed. Such calm courage, such heroic self devotion, they, degenerate Arabs though they were, had still enough of Saracenic chivalry in their natures to admire.

They ceased firing; a silent tribute to such valour; and then Captain Brown rose from his seat, and walked quietly down the breach; not a matchlock was raised, not a shot followed him, as he retired.*

Frantic was his reception from his own Sepoys, by whom he was beloved, having been their Adjutant for years before he obtained his company. No sooner did he reach them than they threw themselves on the ground, clasped his knees, laid their foreheads on his feet, to show how much they honoured him, while they bitterly reproached themselves for having allowed anything to keep them back from supporting him in his danger. His hands were wrung by every brother officer; some even sobbing in estacy of admiration and joy. Praises of his conduct, congratulations on his safety, poured in on every side.

His face was deadly pale; he only said "I was determined that if they did hit me, it should be in front."

Perhaps the most touching testimony to this exhibition of courage is the one that remains yet to be told. Contrary to their usual savagery in battle, the Arabs themselves, of their own accord, sent back the

* The chief details of this scene were years after narrated to the writer by one who had himself been a brother officer of Captain Brown, and an eye witness of the whole.

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body of Captain Bell, and intimated that all the other killed and wounded might be removed under a flag of truce. Among the latter poor Lieutenant Davis was brought in by some of his own Sappers, very seriously, but not mortally, wounded.

It is only due to the gallant regiment who had in this crisis failed, to bear in mind that they were spent men. Above twenty hours had they been in the trenches, and all the time in drenching rain; little were they fit for such a venture—for the cast of a "Forlorn Hope." But time was pressing; to have sent for fresh men from the Camp, which was some miles in the rear, would have involved a delay most likely fatal to the enterprise; so the General pushed them on at all hazards, and unhappily they failed.

It now seemed that nothing could be done without a heavy siege train; so one was sent for, and the troops fell back to await its arrival. However, the Arabs—and they constituted the backbone of the Rajah's army—began to be alarmed for themselves. The crafty, but craven Rajah, seemed hardly worth fighting for, and considering he was at the time a prisoner in the English Camp, the thought naturally rose in their hireling minds "who would pay them?"

They had felt what English light pieces could do; they had witnessed what English courage was; and they were ready to cry "Hold, enough." They opened negotiations with the Resident, who was only too ready to meet them more than halfway. So on

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the 29th December they surrendered the City, and marched out, carrying their arms with them.

On the last day of the year, a private letter, (which is still in existence,) was written by a high official in the English Camp: "30th December, 1817, 2 o'clock p.m. The Arabs have evacuated the City; we are Lords of Nagpore."

CHAPTER II.

A CONSPIRACY.

THUS fell Nagpore. But to understand the importance of its capture, and the turn events subsequently took, it will be well to glance briefly at the circumstances which had rendered its capture necessary.

Nagpore was the capital of a leading State in Central India, one of the three most powerful *rajs* comprised in what was known as the great Mahratta Confedracy—that strange congeries of independent Hindoo states, apparently having nothing in common, no bond of union, save the desire to establish themselves on the ruins of the fast decaying Moslem empire of Delhi, and to exterminate the English. Some twelve years before our tale begins this formidable confederacy had sustained a succession of defeats

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under Sir Arthur Wellesley.* But it seemed that the severe lessons taught them on the battlefields of Delhi, Assaye, and Laswarri, had passed from their memories, and the three chiefs, of Gwalior, Indore, and Nagpore, had sworn, under the nominal headship of the Peishwa of Poona, to regain the mastery.

The character of the Mahratta, as painted by the writers of those days, was the reverse of an attractive one; he is represented, not only as a tyrant, and therefore a coward, but as occupying an unenviable pre-eminence, even among his Hindoo kinsmen, for falsehood and treachery. "Not to be believed on their most sacred oath" is the testimony of one who knew them well. Now the Rajah of Nagpore, commonly known as "Appa Sahib," was a worthy specimen, or rather let us hope an exaggerated type, of his race. For in him all these traits of character, as our tale will show, were signally developed; he was a compound of cruelty, cowardice, and intrigue.

A mere youth, he had mounted the throne of the *Bhoonslahs*, in succession to an imbecile cousin, but under grave suspicion of foul play: he promised however to place himself wholly under the guidance of the British Government; and policy had suggested his being recognised as the lawful Rajah.

In profuse professions of loyalty to the English, and of mistrust of his brother Mahratta chiefs, and of his own Court, he, in the hope of currying favour and diverting attention from his real designs, had applied

* Afterwards Duke of Wellington.

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for additional Government troops for his own personal safety, in the full belief that they could not be spared. But Lord Hastings, the then Governor General and Commander-in-Chief, saw through his man, and taking him at his word, at once threw into the cantonment, which was close to the city, a second Sepoy regiment, nominally as a guard of honour, but the while concentrated troops from Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, as a *cordon* round the Mahratta territory; thereby obtaining for himself the very foothold he needed, in the heart of the disaffected districts, and converting Nagpore into the *point d'appui* for the Pindharri campaign for which he was preparing.

Thus it was that the English forces found themselves within call when, during the autumn of 1817, the intrigues of the Rajah had become so barefaced and so audacious as to compel action. A few forced marches, and the city was surrounded, before Appa Sahib could either carry out his plot or escape. At a moment when a flagrant act of treachery was exposed, he had come into the English camp, on the plea of a sense of danger from his brother Mahrattas, and placed himself in our power; and, as we have seen, the City itself was now in the hands of the English.

With the New Year 1818, a calm seemed to be settling over Nagpore: but it proved only the lull before the bursting of the storm. The main body of the troops had been withdrawn, for the General (Doveton), having so far done his work here, found ample work elsewhere. A comparatively small force

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was left to hold the city in military occupation, while the Rajah still remained at the Residency under surveillance.

Lord Hastings had desired that he should be summarily deposed as a convicted traitor, but the Resident, over whom the Rajah seemed to exercise a fascination, still pleaded his cause, and so far prevailed over the chivalrous soldier spirit of the Governor General, that he consented that Appa Sahib should be once more admitted into his Palace, and formally placed upon his throne—but with a very changed position; no longer the independent fendatory, he was now to be little more than the *Roi Faineant*, with the Resident as his *Maire de palais.*

But clipped though his talons thus were, he was not impotent for mischief, as events soon showed. His real though undefined vassalage to the Peishwa, which no treaty with the English seemed strong enough to cancel or control, and his innate passion for intrigue, seemed to defy all restraint.

In vain did the Resident try to satisfy himself that all was well; day after day one suspicious incident after another would disturb his self satisfaction. But the boy fascinated him, with his more than oriental elegance of person and manner, and plausibility of speech. However, on the 14th of March, a discovery was made, which shook even the Resident's confidence. The office of Resident at Poonah was then filled by that distinguished statesman Mountstuart Elphinstone. He had intercepted a letter written by

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Appa Sahib himself to the Peishwa, arranging a meeting at Chandna, one of the Nagpore forts, on the 16th; they were there to be joined by the other Mahratta chiefs, to concert an attack upon Nagpore, for the recovery of the City, and the massacre of the British force. Not even this carried conviction to the Resident: he still hesitated to act. "How was it possible?" he asked himself. "How could the Rajah, shut up in his Palace, with a Sepoy guard at every gate, give them the slip? Moreover was there not to be a State dinner the following day to which all the English officials, civil and military, were invited? No," said the ever confiding Resident, "the thing is impossible! some enemy hath done this; the letter must be a forgery."

However, that day Colonel Scott, who commanded the troops in the City, was calling at the Residency, and the intercepted letter was put into his hands. Much as he was under the influence of the Resident, he took a far less favourable view of Appa Sahib's character. With a large amount of common sense, and a due sense of his own responsibility, he proposed that at any rate some precautions should be taken. He reminded the Resident that in the morning, being the 15th, the Sepoy company on duty at the Palace would be relieved in the ordinary course, and suggested two companies being sent. Moreover the Grenadiers were next on the roster for Palace duty, so that Captain Brown, who had so signally distinguished himself in the attack on the Gateway, would be there, and being

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the Senior would be in command of the Guard; and a better man for an emergency could not be found. So said Colonel Scott; the Resident approved; and orders were given accordingly.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARREST.

IN the small hours of the morning of March 15th, 1818, the Resident was still sitting in his *sanctum*, pondering over the news of the day before, and the work of the coming day, when a gentle tapping at his *jil mil* (Venetian blind) caught his ear; it was repeated a little louder; on asking who was there, he at once recognised the voice that replied as that of one of his most trusted emissaries (for *espionage* was an essential part of political government at a Native Court). The visitor was admitted at a small side door, which, lying in a recess, could be opened without the light from within being disclosed. "Sir," he said, "there is most important news for you." Yes, it was indeed most important, and urgent forsooth; being nothing less than a conversation which he had overheard between two head men in the Rajah's kitchen that special care must be taken to make the grand banquet of the next day as attractive as possible, for every favourite dish of the English *was to be poisoned.*

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Little sleep visited the eyes of the Resident during that night: and by daybreak Colonel Scott was at the Residency; for the same rumour had reached him; a servant of one of the regimental officers had picked up the same startling *gup* (gossip) from a kinsman in the purlieus of the palace.

Now it was all clear to the Resident how easily the Rajah could keep his appointment at Chandah on the 16th; for in the flurry and excitement of all the English officials being poisoned, what could be easier than for him to march off out of the Palace, and give the Peishwa the promised meeting. It was clear, too, that no time must be lost. Prompt, vigorous action was necessary. Who so suited for such a *coup* as the man who that very morning was to command the relieving guard at the Palace?

So Captain Brown was summoned to the Residency. The Resident taking him aside into his private room, told him that a very important step must be taken that day; the Rajah must be removed from the Palace, be it by fair means or by force, and brought into the Residency, to be kept under close guard.

"Your conspicuous conduct in the attack on the Gateway," he added, "proves your fitness for the duty. It will require calmness as well as courage, you know."

"I will do my best, sir," replied the young officer, "to carry out your wishes."

"Here," and the Resident spreading out a map

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on the table, "is a plan of the Palace. Here are the State Rooms which you will know; to the right lie the Rajah's private apartments, and in the extreme right wing is the *Zenana*, where the young *debauchè* spends many hours of the afternoon. My *Mir Munshi* (native Secretary) will call on him a little before noon and will show him an intercepted letter to the Peishwa, which alone will convict him of intrigue and treachery; he will then deliver a demand from me that the Rajah at once present himself at the Residency, and consider himself a prisoner, pending investigation. If he refuses to come quietly the *Munshi* will communicate with you at the Palace Guard, and you will be prepared to sieze him, and bring him here."

"Do you wish to suggest any course for my adoption, to admit of my gaining access to his presence should the *Munshi* fail?"

"Your course of action I must in the main leave to yourself, Captain Brown, to decide upon; but it occurs to me that your best disguise for obtaining an entrance would be that of a Cashmir merchant with articles for sale for the ladies of the Zenana; some of the fair Rohilla men in your Grenadier company would pass well for Cashmiris, and accompany you. With them at hand you could choose your own time for seizing him; my *Mir Munshi* will easily supply you with *chogas* and *kummerbunds*, and a little colour for your face and hands will complete your disguise."

"You must excuse me, sir, if I at once say I am quite prepared to perform any duty you require of me,

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but I cannot put on a disguise. Whatever I do must be done as an English officer, and in uniform; there must be no mistake about the character in which I appear;" and the young officer, who had been leaning over the table studying the plan, almost involuntarily drew himself up, and gave the little Resident the full benefit of his honest six feet. The action told more than the words, and was not to be forgiven.

To the Resident the idea of a disguise carried with it nothing more undignified or dishonourable than the free use of spies, with which his political position had familiarised him; and while indignant at the rejection of his suggestion, he winced at the implied rebuke from a young Captain of a Native Regiment.

In very altered tone from that in which it commenced did the conversation close. "You understand my wishes, sir; you will of course adopt your own plans. I expect to see the Rajah at the Residency this afternoon, either accompanying the *Munshi*, or under your guard. I shall instruct my assistant, Dr. Gordon, to meet you at the guardroom, in order to accompany you into the Palace." And he bowed him out of the Residency.

With what mingled feelings did Captain Brown ride back! Great was the opening before him—a glorious opportunity! Quick did his heart beat when it was first proposed: but the altered tone of the Resident showed him that he had given dire offence, and he knew that the Resident had it in his power to

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do him much harm should he fail, as he had to further his prospects should he succeed; yet on one point he had not a regret, nor a doubt—he felt he had done right. As a boy in the old cathedral city of Lichfield, he had often heard of the young fellow-townsman Andrè, the hero of Fennimore Cooper's well known tale of the "Spy of the Neutral Ground." Often had his young blood beat with quickened pulse, as he thought of Andrè's eager daring: but his heart had as often sunk again at the remembrance that the young English officer had consented to adopt a disguise, thus bringing himself under the category of *spy*, his detection inexorably involving a felon's, not a soldier's, death. When therefore a disguise was suggested to himself, he at once without a moment's hesitation rejected it; and unfortunately made no attempt to conceal how repulsive the very idea was to his soldier spirit.

However, there was but little time for musing—a great work had to be done—a great hazard too, on which hung his life, and that not as in open fight, in the charge, or in the breach.

Moreover his was now not a single life in its consequences; a short year before he had married; since the day at the Gateway his young wife had become a mother. She lay in the Cantonment close by, but she must know nothing till it was all over.

Snatching a few hurried moments for prayer, he hastened on to the Guard-room. Promptly he formed his plans; the Soubahdar (Native Captain) of his

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company, a high Rajpoot, and, "every inch a man," was taken frankly into counsel; a dozen of the best and most reliable of his Grenadiers were selected to accompany him. With these told off for special duty, he waited at the Guard-room, to know the result of the *Mir Munshi*'s visit to the Rajah.

The wily messenger was foiled by the more wily Rajah; he was refused an interview; the Resident's letter was sent in; but the Rajah was said to be too busy to answer it. The *Mir Munshi* again pressed for a personal interview; but it was again declined. The Rajah was said to have retired to his private apartments to take his *siesta*, that he might be the better fitted to do the honours of the Palace at the public banquet in the evening; so nothing remained for it but to resort to force.

Under the guidance of the *Munshi*, who was familiar with the *adyta* of the Palace, Captain Brown moved his little band out of the Guard-room by a postern door to escape observation. A narrow lane brought them along the wall which surrounded the private gardens of the Zenana to a door where were stationed two Grenadiers to keep guard. Threading a narrow path which ran inside, screened off from the Palace windows by a high hedge of shrubs, they reached a small arched entrance in the basement of the building leading by a narrow circular stair up to the women's apartments; here was deposited a palanquin, with its four bearers; and here four more Grenadiers were placed.

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At stages in the staircase were small landings on which there generally stood some eunuch or sentry on guard, and always one on the top of the stairs; but happily at this hour of general repose — for all classes of natives indulge in their *siesta*, and even sentries on duty are only too ready to succumb to the irresistible influence of habit, and the heat— each of these landings was now without its guard, and even the sentry at the door of the Zenana itself had yielded to the prevailing habit, and in fancied security had laid himself along on a *charpoy* (bed) in a recess abutting on the main building, where, with *kirkees* (windows) all open, he could enjoy any little breeze that was blowing.

Noiselessly did the little band mount those stone stairs; not a word, not a sound, escaped them; their very breathing might be heard in the stillness, all was so hushed. The *Munhsi* led the way, then came Captain Brown, Dr. Gordon, and the Soubahdar, following each other, and the remaining Grenadiers, one having been left on each landing to guard against surprise.

The door at which they now arrived, being the entrance to the Zenana, opened outwards, and in opening would close the recess in which the sentry was lying; a delicate precaution to enable the ladies to pass to and fro for their airings in the garden without being seen; an arrangement of incalculable value in the present emergency, for finding the door only half opened, the *Munshi* had moved it back to close the opening: but the motion startled the sentry; a

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whisper however from the self-possessed *Munshi* that the *Ranis* were passing along satisfied him.

The thick *purdah* which closed the doorway was raised by Captain Brown, who now went in advance, and walked into the room, in which the Rajah and his ladies were. In that galaxy of sable and sallow beauty which met his eye, he was for the moment at a loss to distinguish the effeminate form of the young Rajah; the *Munshi*, however, quickly pointed him out.

As Captain Brown advanced, the Rajah probably thinking it beneath his dignity to raise an alarm, angrily demanded how he had dared to intrude thus on his privacy. "I have the orders of the Resident, Rajah, to convey you at once to the Residency," was the curt answer.

No sooner had he said it than the whole bevy of ladies sprang at him, clutched him by his clothes, his arms, his hair, throwing all their weight upon him, to prevent his seizing the Rajah; but six feet of English manliness was more than proof against their feeble powers, and the frantic resistance of the Rajah too.

Without an effort to relieve himself from the women's grasp, Captain Brown had with his right hand seized the Rajah by his right wrist, and with his left firmly gripping him by the back of his neck, forced him across the room through the door, down the stairs, (the rest of his party closing up behind as he passed;) and at the foot of the staircase, thrust him, with little superfluous politeness, into the palanquin, and closed the doors; with his Grenadiers in close

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escort on either side, he carried him off, down the garden, along the lane, and into the Guard-room, where he found the whole guard, as previously arranged, standing under arms, ready to convey the prisoner to the Residency. So the Rajah was clear of the Palace before his capture was known.

It was indeed a triumph of calm courage—and of good fortune too—for had the Rajah's guards been aroused, if one of the Royal beauties had only thought of raising a cry at a window, or of lifting one of the *purdahs* which so effectually deaden sound, instead of wasting their voices in shrieks at the bold intruder, he must have been overpowered, and the Rajah rescued; and most probably his own life sacrificed in the struggle.

But he had no time to think of all this. As he formed his plan he could realise his danger: though not while passing through it; nor in the excitement did he at all realise the amount of personal indignity of which he had been the victim; it was not until he re-appeared at the Guard-room, prisoner in hand, and received the congratulations, mingled with the jokes, of his brother officers, that he discovered how ill it had fared with His Majesty's uniform. Both his epaulettes pulled off; the tails of his coat torn away; some of his whiskers literally plucked out by the roots, and probably remaining as a trophy in the clutch of one of the sable *Haidis* of the Zenana. Of all this he was utterly unconscious. He had carried his point. A rising hubbub in the Palace told him that despatch

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was necessary; so he quickly marched off his prisoner under a strong guard, and handed him over to the Resident, from whom his reception was very different from the cold *congé* of the morning; for "nothing succeeds like success." It goes for the saying that the State dinner was postponed *sine die*.

Relieved of his prisoner, he now hastened to his tent, to break to his young wife what perils he had passed through, before she should hear a whisper of his danger from any one else. As he told her the tale, with all the modesty of a truly brave man, he added with voice quivering with emotion and gratitude, "May I not truly say 'My heart trusted in God, and He helped me?'"

With Mahratta craft, acting upon the credulous and pliant mind of the Resident, little wonder that this plausible, but contemptible creature, Appa Sahib, contrived to effect his escape from his guards. But no attempt was made by himself or his brother Mahrattas to recover the throne of Nagpore. Hunted like a partridge in the mountains, he was for some time driven from place to place, always evading the troops sent after him; no Native Chief daring, or perhaps caring, to give him shelter. So after dragging out a miserable existence as a fugitive, like the Nana Sahib of Indian Mutiny notoriety, he passed away—no one knowing exactly when, or where, or how.

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A SISTER'S MEMENTO.

A Tale of the Nepal War.

CHAPTER I.

HOW HE LOST HIS WAY.

"UNMARRIED sisters at home," says Colonel Sleeman, in his "Reminiscences of an Indian Official," are "the most valuable *unpaid magistracy* the Government of India has:" and that in ways they often wot not of; as the following story will show.

Among the various races which are included in that heterogeneous body, the Bengal Army, there are none which hold, and deservedly, a higher rank than the Gurkhas of Nepal. The little Gurkha is a born soldier. He stands out among his brother Hill-men as the Rajput does among Hindus. In some respects he excels even the high born Rajput in his soldierly qualities. Brave and fearless as they, he is more than their equal in activity and readiness of resource.

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Bred in the wild freedom of the mountain side, he is less amenable to discipline, but no less "true to his salt." But he was not always so favourably regarded. The time was when he was looked upon as a very troublesome and dangerous neighbour. Reckless of his own life, he was unscrupulous as to the lives of others. Murder and plunder seemed to be the ruling aim and principle of his life, especially along the British frontier. To such an extent were his marauding habits carried on, that it became an urgent necessity for the Government to check their constant inroads, and to inflict severe punishment upon the race. This was the origin of the Nepal War, 1814.

By sunrise on the morning of October 24th, of that year, a small thin red line might be seen moving along the scarped face of the hill on which stood the strong Gurkha fort of Kalunga. This was one of the most important outposts of the Nepâl kingdom, and must be carried before any advance could be made with safety into the interior. A line of sepoys were treading their way in singlefile along a *pagdandi* (footpath), which, by a gradual and very circuitous ascent, led, past two strong stockades by which it was commanded above, to a postern of Umar Singh's fort of Kalunga.

It was from the opposite side of the hill that access to the fort was most easy. The ascent, though covered with dense jungle, was less steep; and the top once gained, there lay nearly three-quarters of a mile of almost level ground up to the fort walls. By this route the real assault was to be made; and here

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in the dead of night the main body of the attacking force had been silently working their way up through the jungle, till they were in possession of the road, which, though rough, admitted of elephants carrying the guns on to the crowning *plateau*. Everything promised well,—the height was gained, the guns were in position, the assault began; but through some misapprehension of orders, the supporting troops did not come up: and the result was a disastrous failure. After fighting gallantly, the advance force was driven back with heavy loss,—especially heavy in English officers, among whom were the dashing General Gillespie, his aide-de-camp O'Hara, Lieutenant Ellis, of the Pioneers, and others.

Our story lies with the single company on the opposite side of the hill. Their advance was designed as a *feint*, to draw off attention as much as possible from the main attack. Their instructions were to make their presence known without endangering their persons. At the head of this little band was a young lieutenant, recently promoted, named Turner. He was a light-hearted dashing young fellow, a general favourite in the regiment, and especially so with his colonel's sweet daughter, who found much to admire in his bright nature and gentle manners. He was generally known by the sobriquet of "Tim." This was his first appearance on active service. His present command was a most genial one. It was rare fun for him to lie safe under the crag that beetled overhead, and slowly, and as it were stealthily, raise his shako

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on the point of his sword till it was just visible to the sharpshooters overhead, in this way drawing down their fire; the sepoys using their bayonets in the same manner, moving their shakos always from left to right as if steadily being on the march along the *pagdandi*. Bullet after bullet would come whizzing down; now and again an arrow, with its fine reed shaft and ugly iron head, would stand quivering as it lodged in a shako. And so for some hours they amused themselves, improvising targets for the Gurkhas to make practice upon, quite ignorant how matters were progressing on the other side of the hill, save only that the booming of heavy guns shaking the very ground against which they leant, told them that their comrades were hard at it in the main attack.

At length they saw the signal from below calling them to retire. Now, more stealthily than before, that their movements might not be seen, they began to retrace their steps. They had not gone far, when they came to a place where a narrow cleft had been fortuitously bridged over by a large boulder, that in some remote age had been dislodged from above, and in its fall had found lodgment here, forming a natural bridge. It required the utmost caution to cross; for the boulder had but the slightest rock hold on either side, and was itself uneven and slippery.

All the company had passed over safely, except the Jemadar and young Turner. Whether from his being a heavier man (a too common failing of an old native officer), and having lost in elasticity of spring

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what he had gained in girth and weight, he no sooner stood on the middle of the boulder than the rock gave way, and he fell forwards, his head against the opposite bank; and unable to make his footing, rolled over and over down some hundred feet into the gorge below.

Poor Tim was appalled and staggered. Far, far down, he could just see the still lifeless corpse; and he sickened at the sight, and only by an effort saved himself from falling over too. Before him yawned the gap of above six feet wide, cutting off his retreat. The sepoys had turned the corner beyond, and could not hear his shouts. To attempt to spring across would have been madness. What could he do? It flashed across his mind that just beyond where he had been standing he had noticed something like a by-path going down from the *pagdandi*. It might lead down round the foot of the rock and by it he might yet overtake his company.

Hurrying back, he now incautiously exposed himself; a sharp stroke, a stinging sensation on the left shoulder brought him up. He was wounded; most providentially the bullet had passed his head and neck, and only grazed the top of his shoulder. For a moment faintness came over him. He leaned against the rock on his right; and soon recovering began to hasten on, but more cautiously than ever now, along the *pagdandi*. He came to the spot which he had noticed. It was evidently a path, but it was so small and narrow, and the brushwood grew so close and

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low, he had to crawl along it. Sometimes it was so steep he had to go feet foremost: sometimes indeed to drop down from one tree root to another. The path was constantly winding from side to side. Still, ugly, suspicious, almost hopeless, as it seemed, his only hope appeared to lie in following it on.

At last the jungle became a little clearer and more open, and he paused to breathe and look around. But the sight was not a cheering one. On the ledge of the rock were bones of animals, apparently goats and sheep, and further on the skeleton and skull of a buffalo. A closer examination of the path by which he had come, now showed him it had no trace of human footsteps; but, as the marks of the pads betrayed, it was a leopard's run; and he was no doubt close upon the creature's lair.

So absorbed had he been in the attempt to make his way, he had become perfectly unconscious of the flight of time. He now for the first time realised that the day must be far advanced, and the time be drawing on when these marauders of the jungle would be prowling about in seach of their prey; and there was he, defenceless and spent, in the depth of their haunts!

He saw that on one side there seemed to be something like a clearing, and a roadway in the underwood, and he threw himself into it eager to escape from such a spot.

Having followed up this clearing for some distance, he found himself, to his unutterable relief,

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on the skirts of the jungle, with open ground before him, and cultivated plots close by. Now in comparative safety, he sat down, to breathe: he unwrapped the handkerchief with which he had hurriedly bound his shoulder, and after soaking it in a little stream, re-bound it more carefully. Then, relieving the growing sense of faintness which he now felt from hunger with some biscuit he had in his pocket,—for he had not broken fast since morning,—he began to collect his thoughts and think out the grave problem, in which direction was he to go. What with the windings of the road through the thicket he had completely lost his bearings, and had no idea in which direction his route to camp lay. Judging from the length of the morning march he thought he could not be above eight or ten miles from Deyrah, which had been their rendezvous, but how to reach it was the question. There he was in an enemy's country, his complexion—still more his uniform—proclaiming him an Englishman, and an officer. Once discovered, death would be as certain at the hands of the savage Gurkhas as it would be under the paw of the leopard.

The cultivation of the fields showed that some human habitation must be near; but it was still a question, if, even should he find it, he would be safe there. In the depth of the valley the gloom was already settling down: a chilly vapour was running along the ground; movement for mere circulation sake was necessary: but the old question arose, in which direction?

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He found a footpath just below the skirt of the jungle, and struck into it. He had not gone far when he heard human voices as if approaching him. Back under cover he stole, and saw three men pass along, one evidently a Gurkha soldier, the other two seemingly field labourers, yet each carrying his match-lock slung on his back. As they passed he overheard them talking in the *patois* of the Dhoon, (of which he had picked up a little,) and found that the English had been repulsed, that Ummr Singh was drawing off all his regular troops and would leave the fort in the hands of the local levies, every villager being bound to bear arms at his chief's call. "One thing is clear," he said to himself, "there's a house of some sort not far off, and the male inhabitants are out of the way; I must try to find it, and take my chance."

Alas, that that dear mother's boy should so think of his situation! From her lips he never heard of *chance*. The leading thought of her resigned mind was, "Though the Lord smite me, yet will I trust Him." The ruling principle she ever strove to inculcate in her children was, "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." There had been, too, in that house of his boyhood one sister who exercised over him the greatest, though the quietest influence. Her bright, happy, trustful example was in itself a lifelong teaching. On parting, she had given him a Prayer-Book, in the flyleaf of which her own hands had written the words of David to the youthful

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Solomon: "Know thou the God of thy *sister*: if thou seek Him, He will be found of thee; but if thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off." But those mother's teachings, those home influences, had all faded away under the glare and glitter of soldier-life. Addiscombe had been a bad nursery for a plant of such tender growth; an Indian mess-room seventy years ago no school for such lessons to be called to mind, when, as in young Turner's case, there was a gentle, amiable temperament at surface, but no depth of religious principle. So it fell on that darkening night; all was very dark to him; no light at all; his thoughts never turned to God; his lips framed no prayer; his only thought was, "I must take my chance."

He had not gone above a mile when he saw glimmering in the distance a steady light different from the glitter of the fireflies which were floating in myriads over, under, and in the foliage of the trees in that humid valley; different from the strange flame of the will-of-the-wisp dancing over the adjacent swamp. It was a steady light, burning in a low hut, the door of which stood open. Slowly and cautiously he crept up to the belt of cactus which formed the hedge of the inclosure. He saw a *paháŕi* woman squatted before the embers of a log fire. She was alone, and not a sound of any one else near. He watched with beating heart and bated breath until he saw her moving about; he then crept still nearer: close to the door. She came and looked out vacantly into the now dark night,

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and was in the act of closing the door, when he spoke, and in her own *patois*. She started back: then came forward again, and asked who was there. Little was her alarm appeased when she saw an English officer in uniform standing before her! She screamed, and would have slammed the door; but he was already in the opening, and a few words of gentle appeal seemed to pacify her.

It was something more than *chance* which brought him to that hut.

CHAPTER II.

HOW HE FOUND IT AGAIN.

A WORD or two about these *paháris*. The name simply means a "hill-man;" but, the tribes in the interior having their more distinctive names, this term is generally applied to the inhabitants of the lower ridges of the Himalayan range. Scattered along these valleys and glades wherever vegetation can be coaxed out of the hill-sides, these men form a sort of fringe to the territory of our more warlike neighbours of the mountains; they hold a somewhat neutral position between the Hindoo of the plains and the Buddhist of the heights. From the first advance of the English along the base of the Himalayas these "men of the marches" seemed to be ready to be on friendly terms. Not skilled mechanics like the

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Punjabis, nor hereditary domestic servants like the Hindostanis of Cawnpore and Oude, they were capital *shikáris* (sportsmen); the humbler among them ready to become hewers of wood and drawers of water, not reluctant to take service with an English officer, and even sometimes to accompany him to a distant station.

Now this *pahári* woman, to whose hut young Turner's steps had providentially been directed, had had a son, too gentle of spirit for the rough life of a soldier, not strong enough for the hard work of the plough, but ready with his gun. He had formed the acquaintance of an English officer who had come on a sporting expedition; he had gone into his service: the simplicity of his bucolic character pleased his new master. Truthful and trustworthy,—so striking a contrast to the ordinary Hindoo servant,—he soon rose into favour, and was induced to accompany his master to Cawnpore; where he soon after died of cholera. So it fell that to this *pahári* woman the sight of the English uniform was not so abhorent as it might have been to many. Her mother's heart at once yearned towards the poor wounded and way-worn Englishman, who so vividly recalled her lost son.

Her manner at once changed. He explained as best he could that he was faint and hungry, and wounded. A *chapátti* was soon cooked for him; and water from the family *lóta* poured into the little drinking cup of his brandy flask; and he began to revive. Then came the graver business of the wound; with the arm sore and stiff, coat and shirt and skin all clotted

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together with the congealed blood, how was he to divest himself of his jacket? She quickly devised a plan; to his amazement she produced a pair of English scissors (they had been a present from her boy), cut away the sleeve at the top of the shoulder, and, relaxing the wound with tepid water, gradually and gently set his arm free. Her remedies were of the simplest—a few bruised leaves; her appliances most rude—a strip of old coarse cotton and a piece of *dasutí* over that; but relief came as by magic, and never did trained English nurse handle patient with gentler touch. A rough *bichaona* (bedding) was laid along by the wall; he was bidden to fear no danger for that night, but to sleep while he could. He, poor fellow, was not long in acting on her hint.

But oh, what a restless unrefreshing sleep was his! He moaned and tossed, and started up perpetually; he was living over again the horrors of the day past. He was lost in the jungle; the half-human cry of the jackal, the grating bark of the fox, the deep bay of the wolf, the hideous laugh of the hyena, the growl of the bear, sounded in his ears. Then came the stealthy leopard, his paw pressing on his chest, the very breath playing upon his cheek. He made a desperate effort to escape; the effort awoke him, and there leaned over him, not a leopard, but his *pahári* nurse!

Then the face changed: it was that of his sister Mary. At her presence all that was horrible passed away. He was now walking with her in the familiar

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glades of dear old Kent; he was telling her of his hopes and his fears, his ambitious aspirations and his disappointments. Yet her face was sad. She seemed to be repeating over and over again the words she had written in his Prayer-Book, "If thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off." Her look was one of loving remonstrance. His heart seemed to sink within him.

Again the scene changed; she was still there, but there were all the monsters of the jungle. And he felt that God had indeed left him to perish; and nothing but her presence, like that of the angel in the lions' den, kept them from falling upon him. Another start! Again he awoke, opened his eyes; and so intense was the reality of his dream, he fully expected to see his sister; but instead of the sweet classical face of the beloved English girl who had mingled with his dream, it was the sallow, broad-cheeked Tartar countenance of his *paháŕi* nurse again! Yet, was it not a relief to him to find that all the horrors through which he had passed were the phantoms of delirium? suggested doubtless by the actual cries,—for the wild beasts of the plain and mountain seemed to make this belt of lower hills a common ground,—of the animals which at night-fall and at early dawn had been roaming the valley close by the hut in which he lay.

A brief consciousness, then a return of delirium, and the same scenes again and again gone through—the same horrors, and ever and anon the same sweet voice, and sad pleading face. So passed the day—so the night; and the next day and the next

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night. Of the flight of time he was utterly unconscious. Daylight and dark succeeded each other unrecognized. All were dark alike, very dark to him!

On the third morning he fell into what seemed a more placid sleep, out of which he awoke quietly and naturally, and refreshed. The good woman was at his side, attracted by his slightest movement. He now recognized her with a smile, and tears of gratitude started to his eyes. She enjoined silence, for she saw he longed to speak; and, busying herself in her household work, kept a little distance from him. He lay watching her; at last he beckoned to her, and then feebly said,—

"When does your husband return?"

"I expect him to-night," she said.

"What will become of me, then?"

"God is good;" was her answer, "and will preserve you."

Crimson was the blush which came over his face at the sound of that word: an ignorant heathen woman speaking of God; and he, a Christian, lying on the brink of the grave, having no place in his mind for such a thought! She misunderstood the cause of the blush—how could she do otherwise?—and added, to allay his anxiety,—

"I will hide you before he comes, or there may be trouble still. He is very kind-hearted and good: but he must be true to the Rajah! However, he will perhaps only stay a day, or a few hours, and then go back to the fort."

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At the back of the hut was a rude shed for stacking wood; here she arranged a bed, gave an additional supply of *kammals* (coarse blankets), and so stacked the faggots that he might be concealed. It was indeed a sorry sleeping-place, especially for one so prostrated; but it was the best she could offer.

What would his English mother have said, could she have seen her darling boy that afternoon, half-lifted, half-dragged along that mud floor, and laid in the recess made among the wood logs, and the bundles of faggots stacked over him?

As evening closed in, the voices of husband and son were heard in the adjoining *khet* (enclosure); and the good woman was ready to welcome them, and supply their evening meal. Long into night did the three talk as they sat by the fire. He could only hear the sounds, not the words: so all was uncertainty, and suspense. At last the voices ceased, and all was still within the hut. But oh, the horrors of that night, who can describe? In spite of the supply of *kammals*, he was perished with cold. No glowing embers on the hearth, nor thick wattled partition to keep out the wind; nothing but rude planking at the side, and the scant roofing of boughs overhead, to protect him from the bitter mist-laden blast which was penetrating to his very marrow. Then the hateful wild beasts were prowling about sniffing the very boarding of the shed, and making night hideous with their cries; all "murdering sleep."

Providentially, with daylight the man and his

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boy were again off for a prolonged term of service; but the mischief was done. In vain did the poor woman hasten, as soon as ever the coast was clear, to bring back her charge into the warmer hut. Carefully was the bedding again laid down; the blankets too were warmed, glowing with heat; but all seemed in vain. She found him speechless, senseless. She litterly dragged his rigid body back into its warm corner, covered him with blankets, chafed his hands and feet, poured warm decoctions of rare merit down his throat; yet he was all unconscious. And so he lay, at times raving with fever, at times shivering with cold, for ten long weary days and nights—and she never left him, never flagged—and, truth to say, never despaired.

On the morning of the eleventh day her devotion was rewarded; he once more opened his eyes and looked a faint smile of consciousness into the wearied, careworn face of his nurse.

But that English youth was a wreck of the robust manliness of a fortnight ago. Not merely were his limbs powerless, but his mind was gone! His vacant wandering eye seemed unable to fix itself on any object: he was indifferent to all that was passing around. So he lay for two days; then came very slowly a little more animation, a little more intelligence; his body the while, with the wonderful rallying power of youth, rapidly regaining strength. He could stand, and even walk about: but his mind seemed still half-lost.

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The poor woman's anxiety to get her invalid safely away and restore him to his friends had now become intense; for, as days passed on, her husband and son might soon be returning home. Happily for her, she had a sister living about three miles off, whose husband had been in occasional employ with English officers as a *shikári*, and who, directly the camp had pitched at Deyrah, had opened communication, supplying milk and eggs and game in the bazaar. No guide could be safer than he. So Kulloo, the brother-in-law, had consented to take charge of the helpless youth, and escort him into the camp at Deyrah.

A disguise was soon effected. Two or three washings of walnut-juice gave his skin the *pahári* hue; a pair of coarse *pijámas* (trousers), worn by the hill-men; a *lui* (shaw) wound over his shoulders; a coarse woollen *pagri* over a small skull-cap protecting his head. Thus attired, and sitting listlessly on Kulloo's *tat* (pony), he might have passed unsuspected and unquestioned through any camp.

On the appointed morning they had started, poor young Turner riding on the *tat*, Kulloo walking alongside. A handful of parched rice and a little millet-seed furnished his morning meal, which he munched as he journeyed on. Many wayfarers passed them, but they attracted no notice; and so they reached the skirts of the camp about mid-day. Here he dismounted; and Kulloo turned with his *tat* towards the bazaar, while young Turner wended his way dreamily

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and tottering along the lines. He passed his own tent, and just recognized it—that it was deserted—not a servant near, not even his favourite dog—he had observation enough to notice this. On he went, vacantly sauntering. Several officers passed, but without noticing him, so perfect was his disguise, and so changed his whole bearing. At length he observed several natives and some officers collecting at a tent where something seemed to be going on. A native, squatted at the entrance, was assiduously tinkling a small hand-bell: this told him that a *neelám* (an auction) was being held. Without any definite object he had turned in, and stood on the edge of the crowd, only half-conscious of what was passing.

A *neelám* is one of the strange contingencies of Indian life—the rapidity with which the sale of an officer's effects follows upon his death. Immediately a death is reported, the commanding officer appoints a Committee of Adjustment, consisting of three officers, who at once take charge of the deceased's property. Deplorable as often is the sacrifice of valuable property so sold, it seems the only, or at any rate the best, course, to prevent the still greater sacrifice of its being destroyed or stolen. An intelligent sergeant, with a fair "gift of the gab," is generally forthcoming as auctioneer; and the proceeds are at once realized and sent off to the Administrator General, to be credited to the estate of the deceased officer.

Such a sale was now proceeding at Deyrah. Outside were picketed horses and dogs, waiting their

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turn. Lot after lot, clothing, books, guns, furniture, had been knocked down. The sergeant auctioneer held up a book of attractive binding, as a special prize for some one. Suddenly, from outside the crowd came a voice, more like a frantic cry than a human voice: "That's my sister's present!" It acted like an electric shock. All eyes turned at once to the quarter from whence the sound came. As he sprang forward to sieze the book, the man's *pugri* fell off, and disclosed his natural hair.

"Why! by Jove! It's Tim himself!" was shouted out.

If further proof of identity were needed, it was forthcoming. A handsome spaniel, tied to a tent-peg outside, heard that voice, tore the tent-peg out of the ground, rushed between the legs of the crowd, sprang upon his master's chest, and began to lick his face, and whine piteously.

Yes; it was Tim Turner!

The shock was too much for him—too much for body and mind; bursting into an hysterical fit of tears, he would have sunk to the ground, had not the strong arms of one or two officers been ready to support him.

Happily, the regimental doctor was there, and took charge of the fainting boy, and had him at once carried off to his own tent. There, under gentle restoratives, he gradually rallied, and slowly and incoherently told the tale, so far as he could, of his last three weeks. He then learnt that on that fatal morning the gallant General Gillespie, his aide-de-

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camp, the officer of the pioneers, and others, had fallen; and that, as no tidings came of him, he had been reported "Missing;" and, as days and weeks passed, was regarded as "dead;" and therefore his goods had been ordered to be sold with the others.

After a little while the good doctor left him alone in his tent, with the strictest orders that not one of the crowd of impatient brother officers was to be admitted that day. There he lay, half-bewildered with the events of the morning. Eagerly did he clasp the recovered treasure—his sister Mary's present—the more precious to him now that, since he had left home, she had fallen into consumption, and died. He opened the book: on its first page were the words which in his hours of delirium had sounded so pleadingly, yet so solemnly, in his ears: "If thou forsake Him, He will cast thee off." Gradually their meaning—their truth, in his case—seemed to become apparent; by slow degrees, the long diseased retina of his mind seemed to be recovering power. As by an involuntary yet irresistible impulse, he threw himself off the *charpoy* on his knees. The page open before him was blotted and blurred with tears—bitter tears of shame, and gradually sweeter tears of repentance. The scales—the thickened scales of wilful indifference —were falling off from his eyes, and he began to see clearly—to see in what danger he had been—what an escape he had had. He dwelt now upon those words: "If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee." And he *did* seek Him. At that moment—who may doubt

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it?—the recording angel entered the record, "Behold, he prayeth;" for he did pray, as he had not prayed for months and years, perhaps as he had *never prayed before*; and then, his body exhausted with the soul-struggle, he again laid himself on his *charpoy*, and soon fell asleep.

His was a calm, peaceful sleep now; and his dreams no longer wild and weird, but full of joy and hope. His mind soon travelled far away, back to the familiar woods of Kent, back to the beech avenue that led up to his mother's quiet, secluded home. There, at the door, where she had pronounced her farewell blessing as he left—there she seemed to stand again, smiling in her tears, to receive her long-absent boy, welcoming him with words to him so full of deep significance: "My son that was dead is alive again!" while in the still air came floating down the angel-notes of another familiar voice: "If thou seek Him, He will be found of thee." . . . . *sought!* . . . . FOUND!

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How a Fort Ditch was Plumbed.

An Episode in the Punjab Campaign.

DURING an Indian campaign, about forty years ago, it became necessary to take the strongly fortified city of Mooltan: for the two-fold purpose of punishing a flagrant act of treachery, and of strengthening our own position in the Punjab.

The city held a commanding position; planted on the only knoll of high ground in the district, it was visible for miles round. Its massive walls, which though only of mud, (and with the old-fashioned siege trains they were the hardest to batter down,) heavily mounted with guns, many of which bore the stamp of European manufacture, frowned defiance far and wide; while high above the rest, and most defiant of all, rose the *enceinte*, the Fort itself. Many a siege had it withstood; and it still boasted of being one of the fast-decreasing number of "maiden forts of Hindostan." The surrounding country was very arid, bordering on desert,

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with scarcely a tree of any growth, beyond some conspicuous avenues of palms, exotics here, which a former chief had introduced. One of the old, broad, classic rivers of India flowed near, and supplied the water for the ditch or moat, with which the whole city was surrounded. The besieging camp was on the whole well placed, and had been favoured with more than an average of healthiness; for, as a rule, in India verdure and health are found in inverse proportions. Still so large a force as was now hurriedly gathered together here, though free from any strong local provocatives to disease, could not long show a clean bill of health. The hill-men of the frontier were beginning to droop, as they sighed for the more bracing air of their native heights. The Hindostanis, despite all the sanitary precautions of the Quarter-Master-General's department, showed signs of failing strength and heart; and the European part of the force were daily sending in increasing sick returns. Time pressed—for the sake of the troops, and for other reasons; the surrounding country was becoming disturbed, while the more remote districts, denuded of troops, who had been all wanted for the siege, were growing restless. The city *must fall*. England's honour must be vindicated speedily. The blood of the two brave young Englishmen, the representatives of their country, who had been cruelly done to death beside its walls, must be avenged without further delay.

Impatience had now begun to show itself in camp. Weary of the protracted siege, with its monotonous

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duties of systematic investment; the men were eager for the excitement of the crowning assault; and it was generally considered to be close at hand. Spies had reported that disease and famine were daily claiming their victims by hundreds in the city,—that desertions were of nightly occurrence. They could not hold out much longer; yet it would be no bloodless achievement. The enemy knew that they deserved no mercy; they expected no quarter; and they meant to sell their lives dearly. All this was generally known in camp; and it only made men the more eager for the end.

The City walls had been fast crumbling away under the pounding of our siege guns, and would offer no great difficulties. But *then* the real work of the day would begin. However easily they might be mounted, the Fort, which stood out in an extreme corner, would still remain to be gained. It was the stronghold of the besieged; here they would make their last stand. To reach it would be a march of death to many. They would have to fight their way foot by foot; and of all fighting street fighting in an old Indian city is the most deadly. Every roof, every window, every loop-hole in the walls, has its matchlock men, where, under cover, they can pick off their enemy calmly, and with unerring aim; while the Fort guns, (which always command the city itself, as a precaution against an *emeute*, as well as the glacis against an attack from without,) would sweep down the long narrow streets, and hundreds of brave fellows fall without being able to

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strike a blow in fair fight. This, too, was well known in camp, and the general hope was that, while feints might be made at different points on the city walls, the grand assault would be on the Fort itself, on its water-face,—for the main ditch ran under its very walls.

While the camp was in this state of excitement and impatience, and everything indicated that the assault would be made within a week at furthest, one evening there was the usual gathering of officers in the Artillery mess-tent, which, as a rule, included those of the Engineer corps, who were too few in number to establish a mess of their own. It happened that the old Brigadier-General, and the Chief Engineer, were both present. Naturally, the coming assault was the topic of conversation. On the faces of the elder men the glow of hope for success, and for honourable mention in General Orders, was perceptibly subdued by the thought of absent dear ones, whose future, for weal or woe, hung on the results of that assault; while among the youngsters light-hearted enthusiasm seemed to hold unbrôken sway.

In the course of the conversation there passed some remarks, loud enough to reach the Brigadier's ear, about the attack being made on the Fort itself, as the more brilliant and the less bloody course; and all the youngsters were in favour of it. The Brigadier, turning to the Chief Engineer, said, as though quite casually, "Well, Colonel, I suppose you are prepared, whenever the order comes? All the ladders, and those sort of things, ready? By the way, do you

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know the exact depth of the ditch on the Fort face?" "Not *exactly*," was the reply, "but, I fancy, near enough for our purpose." "I wish I knew to a foot," said the Brigadier. "It might save many lives;" he added gravely. Then, looking at the young men who had been the loudest in their remarks about making the assault direct on the Fort, he said, "Well, young gentlemen, I admire your zeal; but, considering that we know the ditch is much deeper opposite the Fort than round the City, I can't say much for your united forethought, when not one of you has had—I will not say the pluck, for that I don't doubt—but the wit to go and plumb it."

The remark was like the bursting of a shell; nearly every man at the table felt himself hit, and hit hard.

Soon after, the party broke up and began to disperse. A young subaltern of Engineers—we will call him Norval—as he was passing a group of officers waiting at the door of the mess-tent for a few last words, was thus greeted by a young captain of Artillery, named Wilson: "A pretty good wigging all you young Engineers got to-night, Norval; and I must say you deserved it." "Perhaps so;" was Norval's quiet remark, as he walked away.

This was not the first sneer Captain Wilson had launched at Norval: for before coming into camp, they had been together in cantonments. A few words will explain the different characters of these two men, and their attitude towards each other. Norval was a

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man of mark, though he could hardly be said to be a popular man. Indeed, a natural reserve prevented this; but, his readiness to help (and his position as an Engineer Officer in cantonments, gave him many opportunities of helping), and his gentle, thoughtful bearing, commanded regard and, young though he was, respect; while Wilson's more genial manner—for he was a first-rate companion, and the very life of a mess—made him a more general favourite among youngsters. But unhappily, Wilson's early training had been very different from Norval's. That of the latter had been precisely of the kind out of which the consistent practical Christian is the most likely to be developed; for in his early home religion had been a quiet, unpretending principle of daily life. Wilson, on the other hand, had been accustomed from childhood to the most rigid observance of religious forms, and had seen in the inner life of his home so much that was unreal and untrue, that his naturally quick, discriminating mind had grown to regard the profession of religion as an imposture. He remembered bitterly how many a hard ungrateful task had been imposed, and duty exacted, in the name of religion. He held in contempt—and he made no secret of it—all those who were supposed to be influenced by religious motives. He had the character among his acquaintences of being a scoffer; yet he was so clever, so able to hold his own in argument, and so amusing, that, in spite of what they disapproved, he was very popular among his brother officers, especially the younger ones; and to be popular

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was the great aim of his life. Norval recognised his abilities, but shrunk from the man who so perverted them. Wilson, again, was so utterly incapable of appreciating Norval, that he lost no opportunity of showing his dislike towards him. Norval was a first-rate cricketer, and ever ready to join in a match; a more than average billiard player; and a keen sportsman; but, the very fact that a bet on any game, and still more an oath, was hateful to him; that he was always in his place at church, and known to take an interest in the spiritual needs of the men under him; was enough to brand him in Wilson's mind as an hypocrite, and to draw forth, whenever opportunity offered, the cutting sneer. He was Wilson's *bête noir*.

Hence rose that remark after mess on the evening already referred to. It so happened, that the rebuke of the old chief applied least of all to Norval, for he had only a few days before joined the camp, and had had plenty to do in learning the duties of his own post; and had never thought of enquiring what his seniors knew, or did not know, regarding the state of the siege.

Nevertheless, from the moment the Brigadier's words were uttered, Norval made up his mind. *He* would wipe off the reproach. As he left the mess-tent, little heeding Wilson's words, or perhaps exulting in the thought that he would very soon give him cause to regret them, he crossed over to the lines of the European regiment, which lay beyond the Artillery, and, picking his way between tent-ropes or over insidious

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tent-pegs, to the tent on the extreme left, he there found the man he wanted, Captain Parker, who commanded the Light Company of the 10—th Regiment.

"Parker," he said, "I am bent on a little spree to-night, and I want you to join me."

"What's up now? You out on a spree! Well, yes, I'll join you; for I am very sure friend Norval will go in for no spree, as he calls it, in which I should be ashamed to join him."

"Well, look here, old fellow, just now at mess the old Brigadier startled us all by asking us, as we were crying so loud for an assault on the Fort, whether we knew the exact depth of the ditch on that side. And to our shame, be it said, not a man had ever thought of it. I can't take much blame to myself, because I have so lately joined; but I should like, for the fun of the thing, to go and take soundings (as my old father the Commodore would say), and present it to the old boy before he turns in for the night. Will you come and help me?

"Will I not? When do you go?"

"Well, we ought to have some fellows with us in case of a scrimmage; for we may have to fight our way back. So, if you can bring half a dozen of your best 'Lights,' I should be glad. I needn't say, don't bring drunkards; but bring clear-headed fellows—men who don't fancy they require a tot of grog to brace up their pluck, forgetting that it muddles their brains. We must have men who have brains and pluck at command."

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"All right," said Parker, "you shall have the best I can give; men in whose hands I can trust my own life, and yours to, if need be."

"Then let us meet at the battery on the extreme left of our lines—that will bring us pretty straight in front of the Fort. Now I'll go and arrange with old Jones, who is Field Officer, and get him to let us pass the sentries. It's past eight now; the moon won't be up till nearly one, and, luckily for us, it's the dark side of the moon (as the native would say), so it will be all the darker and better for us. If we start at ten, we shall be back—if we ever do get back—before the moon rises."

"So be it—ten sharp."

They parted. Parker went to think over his Company, and pick the men he thought would be the most reliable for such a venture. Success was of vital importance; for he knew that nothing but success would justify such a step without orders, and save him perhaps from a Court-Martial. Norval at once proceeded to find Major Jones, and talk him into letting them pass; which was no easy matter, for the old man, personally as brave as any of them, had a provokingly strong regard for "Rules and Regulations," and had no fancy to being privy to hair-brained adventures. He was, however, won over, and consented. "Remember, Normal, it may cost me my commission, if you chance to come to grief; yet for your sake I'll run the risk."

That settled, Norval had much to do, and not

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much over the hour to do it in. His habits of ready resource now stood him in good stead; he had at once grasped the idea, and soon formed his plans. He was an enthusiastic angler; and knowing that while the force had been lying so many weeks before the Fort, they had had many a day's good fishing in the old classic river that skirted the camp, he had stowed away some tackle among his baggage in the hope of getting his share of the sport. This he now turned to good account. At the Artillery canteen he got a large bung-cork; this he cut into a float by tapering it upwards to a point, leaving the bottom flat; through the middle he slipped a quill, inside which he fixed a piece of mainspring, and run through it a strong line he had—strong enough to land a *masheer** of ten or a dozen pounds weight. Thus he contrived a first-rate float, through which the line would run freely one way, but would not slip one inch the other way. On one end of the line he fastened a large-sized plummet, and wound it all up on a short piece of bamboo. This was all his apparatus—simplicity itself, yet deserving a patent.

It was now nine o'clock. One hour more he could call his own. The hour—how it was spent was only known by the subsequent disclosures of his "bearer," who said that when he had gone into the tent to take his master a cup of tea, he found him very busy writing; that, when he afterwards lifted up the

* A *masheer* is a large fish met with in the rivers of Northern India, and highly prized by anglers as the Indian salmon.

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purdah (curtain) to take away the cup, his master was on his knees; and that, as he left the tent to go out, his master placed in his hand a thick packet, with orders that, if he did not return by morning, it was to be given to the Paymaster.

As the stillness of the night-air was broken by the several regimental *gongs* striking ten, Norval appeared at the rendezvous. Parker and his men were already there, and good Major Jones was there too, to protest once more—almost with tears—and to let them pass the sentries.

It was now quite dark. The sentries of the enemy formed a *cordon* about three hundred yards outside the city walls, and about twice as far in front of the advance line of the English pickets; and their presence was only to be detected by the sound of their voices, as they met at the end of each beat, and passed on the word "*Sub achchha!*" ("All's well!") from end to end of the line. The little party were now fairly on their way; treading softly and slowly they stole along till within about fifty yards of the enemy's sentries. Here they stopped. Two sentries were in the act of meeting straight in front of them; they passed the word to each other, and parted on their return way. Norval now counted how long it took them to reach the other end of their beats and back again. They went, and came, and parted. Norval waited still,—with his little band, their hearts beating quick and loud, so as almost to be heard in the dead stillness of the night,—waited till he knew that the sentries

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must be close at the end of their beats with their backs still turned, and a clear two hundred yards between them. Then at a word from him all the party sprang forward as noiselessly as possible, were soon beyond the sentries, and up to the bank of the ditch itself.

There, a few yards in front of them, rose up, looming out against the dark sky, the towers of the Fort, and at their feet the ditch—of unknown depth. A glance betrayed the real state of affairs. The flanking bastions had been sadly pounded by the heavy guns, and in some parts the curtains between had been entirely demolished, and crumbled down till the *débris* gave an easy ascent at the water's edge.

As the bank of the moat had been somewhat raised, it furnished cover and shelter on its outer side. Here Parker and his men lay down concealed. Norval arranged his apparatus for the cast. Unwinding his line from the stick and fastening the end round his body, he hung it in loose coils on his right arm, and took the plummet in his right hand. Then noiselessly crossing the pathway on the bank, he stole down to the water's edge, and threw the plummet sufficiently high to insure a good arc and straight fall. It carried with it, coil after coil, the line off his arm, and fell in the very middle of the ditch. It dropped with a sharp plash—a single sound; it made but a slight noise, not more than a fair-sized fish would make as he snapped at a fly,—yet that slight noise "sounded an alarm on the dull ear" of night. Instantly all was life. The sentries started out of their half-sleeping stroll, and

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fired off their matchlocks; the guards sprang to the battlements, and blazed away in the direction from which the sound had come. The sentries on the glacis followed suit without aim or object. Norval, the instant he had made his cast, had sprung back across the bank, and was lying concealed by the side of Parker. Slowly raising his head over the bank, he could see the guards hurrying to and fro along the ramparts, running down the sloping *débris* to the brink of the water, and there standing aghast. But there was nothing to be seen—nothing to account for the noise. The sound was not repeated. There was evidently nothing astir. So the firing gradually ceased; the men returned to their posts, or their slumbers; and Norval heard on the ramparts an occasional laugh, as the joke was passed along, "*Kali machhli tha!*" ("It was only a fish!")

That danger passed, it now remained to draw out the line with its register float, and to make good the retreat. But Norval waited till all was perfectly quiet before he stirred from his lair. He waited—it seemed hours—when the gongs in camp began to sound eleven. "Now for it," he thought, "or I shan't be back by midnight." So he crept up the bank again, across the path, and down the other side, close to the water, where the grass was longer, and helped to conceal him as he lay at full length on the very brink. Then began the work of drawing in the line; round and round he turned slowly, over and over, noiselessly winding the line round his chest, converting

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himself into a winch—until he had the cork in his hand. In the excitement he forgot himself for the moment; turning less cautiously than usual, his foot touched the water. The plash was heard. Again all were on the *qui vive* on the walls; but nothing seemed to come of it; so the sentries relapsed into quiescent confidence, and contented themselves with the thought, "There goes that fish again!" But it brought Norval back to his former prudence: more slowly and silently than ever he gathered round him the few feet of line that remained.

At last it was all done, and the plummet was in his hand! He now crawled back to Parker, touched him; the signal was passed on to the men, and the retreat began. This was a far more tedious and delicate affair; they now had the enemy, already startled, behind as well as in front. The slightest sound would have betrayed them, and all might have been undone. So one by one, in single file, at short intervals, on hands and knees, they crept along, until they were within some fifty yards of the enemy's sentries. Now Norval, who was in advance, pulled up; all closed in; not a word was uttered. With baited breath they waited till the sentries had met and parted, and were on the extreme end of their beat again; then they rose cautiously on their feet, and with a simultaneous spring made for the lantern, which, by agreement, had been placed to guide them back to the battery; and were again safe and sound within their own lines.

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There was Major Jones, only too ready to welcome them. Between night-rounds he had been constantly at the battery; for his anxiety was so intense that he could not rest in his tent. It is due to him to say that, during those two weary hours of agonizing suspense, the brave old man had thought more of the danger of that "young mad-cap Norval," then of his own imperilled commission. The trembling voice and the convulsive grip with which he greeted the young Engineer told how much he had gone through.

With a very fervent "good night," and "God bless you!" to him and to Parker, and with a kindly shake of the hand to each of the men, and the assurance that he should never forget how they had joined him in a venture of life or death, Norval made straight for the Brigadier's tent. The old man was asleep; so, seeing a light in the Chief Engineer's tent close by, he walked in and said, "Colonel, I find the Brigadier has turned in, so I come to you. If you'll kindly *unwind me*, you'll know the depth of the ditch under the Fort rampart. Please tell the Brigadier I will vouch for its accurracy."

"Tell me how you did it," said he eagerly.

"Let me off for to-night, Colonel. You shall hear all to-morrow, when in reporting it I may have to ask your forgiveness for unauthorised absence from camp after tattoo."

He had not left the tent many minutes when the Brigadier awoke, and was told by his bearer that

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"Norval sahib" had been to see him, and had gone to the Chief Engineer. A note at once brought the Colonel, with the line in his hand. Nothing would now satisfy the Brigadier but that Norval should be sent for, as he could not sleep again till he had heard how it had been done.

"Captain Wilson," he called out—for Wilson was his orderly officer, and was in attendance close at hand—"will you oblige me by telling Lieutenant Norval that I wish to see him at once. He has actually gone and plumbed the ditch!"

Captain Wilson, who was very comfortable, as he lay back in his easy-chair dozing over his *cheroot*, was not over well pleased to be thus disturbed,—and still less for such a purpose. So he went on his errand in no very gracious mood. On reaching Norval's tent he made straight for the *purdah*, and was going to lift it, when the bearer stopped him, "*Hookum na*," he said, (which means "the order is not to admit any one").

"I must see your master," Captain Wilson retorted haughtily, and was again moving to lift the *purdah*; but the bearer again interfered, and, joining his hands, deprecating Captain Wilson's entering the tent, said, "*Sahib girja parhta hai*" ("My master is saying his prayers").

Wilson turned contemptuously on his heel, saying, loud enough for Norval to hear, "Tell your master the Brigadier wants him immediately."

"'Saying his prayers!'—hum!—more cant and

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humbug, eh? Yet .... did he expect I would come for him at this moment? .... No, it can't be," slowly thought Wilson with himself as he walked back. "There can be no hyprocrisy in this at any rate. .... That man must be sincere. .... '*Saying his prayers*!'" The sound of his own voice this time, in such very different tone from that in which the words were first uttered, set him musing: and his uncertain steps, now slow, now quick, betrayed that a struggle was going on in his mind as he wended his way back to the Brigadier's tent.

Norval the while had been, as his bearer had truly said, "saying his prayers!"—prayers overflowing with thankfulness that his life had been preserved. As he rose, he called to his servant and asked for the packet he had put into his care. He opened it with tearful eye and trembling hand, as he thought how the contents might have told to his mother, and to her whom he hoped in time to make the partner of his life, the tale of his soldier death. Again ascended from his heart the prayer of gratitude to Him into whose hands he had committed himself, for that he had gained his object, and was safe.

He proceeded at once to the Brigadier's tent. As he reached it he was accosted by Captain Wilson. "Norval, can you ever forgive me the wrongs I have done you in thought and act? I feel now how I have wronged you. Can you ever forgive me? May we not be friends? such a friend as you I need, or I am lost."

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From that hour they were friends indeed.

The assault was made on the Fort side. And in a few months—the Victoria Cross not having then been established—the *Gazette* which announced Lieutenant Norval's promotion to a regimental Captaincy proclaimed him Brevet-Major.

Thus was the ditch plumbed, and many a life saved—and one heart was plumbed too, and set in the way of being saved.

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A Night and a Day on the Frontier.

CHAPTER I.

THE CALL TO ARMS.

"HOW fortunate you are here, Davies," said Colonel Weatherly, of the —th, as they two, with Lieutenant Watson, the Adjutant of the corps, sat together at breakfast in the Colonel's bungalow in one of our frontier stations early in the month of May 186—.

An Indian breakfast is the important meal of the day, and the breakfast table often does duty for a council-board. Many a good stroke of business has been done over a dish of *machhli bhát* (fish and rice), a stereotyped first course of an Indian breakfast, where fish can be had, or over the *cheroots* with which it as regularly winds up. In England if you want to have a private chat with a man on business, you would probably ask him to come and take a quiet dinner with you; in India you would ask him to breakfast.

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On that particular morning the Colonel had asked the Commissariat Officer, Captain Davies, and the Adjutant to drop in to breakfast after parade, to talk over some minor matters of regimental commissariat. While they were sitting leisurely finishing off the important meal of the morning with a fragrant weed, the *dák* (post) arrived. A pile of letters in envelopes of every size and shape, from the scented lady-like *billet doux* to the big greasy-looking "official," were placed beside the Colonel. Tossing over to his Adjutant, one after another, those which evidently concerned the orderly-room routine rather than himself personally, he came upon one far less official and imposing in appearance than many of its companions of the bag, but with the word "*Immediate*" underscored in the corner. This he opened himself and read in silence, many a tell-tale play of expression passing over his face the while.

"How fortunate you are here, Davies," said he. "Here's a *confidential* as well as '*immediate*' from Brigade head-quarters; and we must take prompt action. It seems that the prudent General's entreaty to put off till the cold weather the punishment of those Momands who have been harrying our frontier goes for nothing. Our Punjab masters think the *qui cito bis* is as applicable a rule in giving a thrashing as in making a present. I am instructed to have a supply of camels within reach for emergent use, and to see that all the camp-equipage of the regiment is in good order. We must be ready to take the field at a day's

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notice, and that so cautiously that not a hint of any movement may reach our friends on the frontier. So, Davies, I must throw myself on your ingenuity and discretion. Whatever you do, remember, not a whisper of what is up."

"All right, Colonel; on that score I think you may trust me. I have been long enough in close-quarters with our Pathan neighbours on these hills to know the value of secrecy as well as despatch. 'Forewarned is fore-armed' is an old English proverb; but these unbelievers know the value of it quite as well as we do, and be hanged to them! Our only chance of getting the upper hand of them is by catching them napping—if they ever do sleep, the wide-awake thieves!"

"Well," said the Colonel, how can you arrange about the tents and the camels?"

"I can see my way to covering the parade-ground with canvas by sunrise to-morrow morning, if necessary, without raising a ghost of a suspicion that anything is astir! Only yesterday one of my *jemadárs* of *kalásis* (head tent-pitcher) reported that the roof of one of the *go-downs* where the tents are stowed away leaked viciously after that downpour of two days ago; and nothing will be more natural than that I should order out all the tents and have them pitched for a day or two in the sun to get them dried before laying them up for the hot weather. So that difficulty admits of an easy solution, Colonel."

"And how about the camels?"

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"Well, I think I can compass that too without much difficulty. I always have a muster and inspection of all the camels towards the end of May; but I can easily let the contractor know that it will be more convenient for me to hold my muster a little earlier this year. I think it very likely my old friend Abdoolah Khan will pay me a visit at my office to-day to receive orders; and I have only to tell him I desire to cast the eye of favour on his camel-herds the day after to-morrow—or even to-morrow if necessary—and I doubt not the old boy will be glad enough to bring them in from their lower grazing grounds now, instead of a week later and a week hotter; and he'll never smell a rat."

"So be it then. I'll leave all that to you, Davies; only don't let a whisper of what's up get abroad. Watson and I will arrange all the little regimental details. Then you come and dine with me at mess to-night, and after mess we can adjourn here again and talk over the day's work."

That evening the trio met again at the Colonel's bungalow, and were sitting on a *chambutra* (raised platform) outside, enjoying a weed and the evening breeze, and talking over the probabilities of the coming affair, when a camel came shambling up the road, and the *shútr sowár* (camel-rider) dismounting, placed in the Colonel's hand with a devout *salám* a letter he had just brought from Peshawur.

It contained the "programme" of the expedition.

At Ten o'clock on the second night a wing of the

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Regiment was to be at a frontier Fort some twelve miles off, there to be joined by a squadron of "Guides" Cavalry from Hotee Murdan, a regiment of Sikh Rifles, already moving from the Derajat, a wing of a Gurkha regiment, and a mounted mule-battery.

The commandant of another Punjab Irregular Corps, by brevet a Lieutenant-Colonel, though regimentally only a captain, was to command the whole force with local rank of a Brigadier.

The sting of a scorpion lies in its tail. In the concluding paragraph of this letter was contained the only part that could be supposed to have any sting in it. Some men, placed as Colonel Weatherly was, would have bristled all over with indignation; some, perhaps, would have committed themselves to a remonstrance against supersession. Now Colonel Weatherly did neither: he felt the smart; he winced for a moment under a sense of injustice. He, a "Queen's Officer," to serve under a "Sepoy Officer," and one really his junior—it was a trial to his *amour propre*. He might certainly escape the false position if it were a false one—by sending his Major in command, as only a wing of the Regiment was under orders; but then, had he not come out to India expressly with the hope of seeing service? and although a few days' brush among some frontier robber clans was not quite the form of service he had pictured to himself as the field on which his laurels were to be won, yet was he not a soldier? Go he would—and would do his best.

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He did go: and played no secondary part, though for a time his was a secondary position. Our tale will tell how gallantly he bore himself at the head of his men, though his own commission dated from the Horse Guards, and that of his Captain-Brigadier only from the old "India House."

CHAPTER II.

CLEARING THE HEIGHTS.

SOME two miles from the base of the mountain range, which here marks the boundary of English territory, there runs a ridge of high ground, a continuation on a smaller scale of the Sewalic range which skirts the base of the Himalayas. From this ridge a spur stretches outwards in the direction of the mountains, on the extreme point of which stands a small Fort, built to command a defile or pass leading up to a group of villages occupied by some of the most desperate and troublesome of our frontier neighbours.

This Fort was to be the rendezvous of the little force, from which the advance was to be made at midnight into the Momand Pass. But to ensure the troops being fresh for their night's work, orders had been given that they were to halt for the day on the plain beyond, within easy reach of their starting-point,

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yet out of the sight of the watchful hillmen. As the evening closed in the several Regiments began to march from their respective camping-grounds, all converging on the little Fort which was to form their rallying-point, and their base of operations.

By eight o'clock all had assembled; a council was held, at which the Brigadier briefly explained his plans for the little campaign. They were to push over the intervening ground which lay between them and the mouth of the pass, as noiselessly as possible, in the dark hour before the moon rose, which would be soon after two o'clock; then the Gurkhas were to scale the hill on the right, while the Sikhs,—if a little inferior to the hillmen of Nepál in their cat-like powers of climbing, yet not a whit behind them in readiness for hard work,—were to occupy that on the left, thus commanding the pass itself, through which the Europeans, headed by a small detachment of the "Guides" infantry, and the mules with their small guns and gun-gear on their backs, were to work their way; the "Guides" cavalry to remain outside to protect the camp, and cut off any fugitives. The offending villages were believed to be some four miles up the defile, where the hills opened out for a couple of miles and again closed in, forming a little basin in which these marauders had established themselves in imagined security.

At midnight the advance began; the level ground was well cleared, and the main column were just entering the gorge when the friendly moon

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rose behind them, their course lying in a westerly direction, and made their march the more easy without disclosing their presence. No serious difficulty confronted them, as they plodded along steadily, and with all possible silence, lest even the echoes should betray them, though there were dangers overhead of which they were wholly unconscious. On the left the Sikhs were working their way up the heights gaining point after point without any *contretemps*. But not so the little Gurkhas on the right.

As they were scaling the last crag, the crowning peak of the first spur which commanded the plains below, they were suddenly brought to a standstill. For a moment the issues of that night's adventure were in jeopardy. The *havildar* (native corporal) of the advance party stopped short, and creeping back under cover, signed to his men that there was danger ahead. They were on an outpost of the enemy! Five yards above them lay a *Momand* scout!

There he lay, *jezail* in hand, pointing downwards upon them—yet he did not fire! he did not move! With cat-like step the Gurkha stole a little forward to have a nearer look at him, and then found that the man was asleep! He had no doubt been on the watch all night. His hand still grasped the matchlock, which covered the *pagdandi* (foot track) up the face of the hills, but from fatigue, or fancying that with the risen moon all danger of a surprise was over, he had laid his head on a boulder and dozed off, and was now in a sound sleep.

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Nothing would be easier than to take a deliberate deadly aim, such as a Gurkha so well knows how to do, but the report would rouse the whole hillside and valley. Nor would a bayonet-thrust dispose of him so noiselessly but that a shout or a groan would give the alarm. Had it been a Sikh—or one of the "Guides,"—he would have had no other alternative, and the risk of discovery would have been unavoidable, and that at a time when retreat would have been madness. But in addition to his rifle and bayonet, the little Gurkha always has slung by his side his own national weapon, the *kukri*,* and in the use of this the little hillman saw at once his only chance lay. With a signal to his party to halt and crouch down, he himself, as quick as thought, disappeared round the base of the crag on his right. It was a moment of awful suspense! When he re-appeared his face was seen just peering over his still sleeping victim. His left hand grasped the *pagri* and hair-knot, his right brought the kukri under the unhappy Momand's chin; it needed only the single *draw*, and the headless trunk slid down to the ledge below, without a sound escaping him! All was the work of a moment. Yet in that moment the danger was averted, the crisis passed; and now the height was gained.

And what was going on elsewhere?

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* The *kukri* is a small sword curved inwards like a sickle. The wound is inflicted by a *draw*, and not a *cut*.

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CHAPTER III.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

ALL unconscious of this danger which the Gurkhas had passed through on the height, the main column, comprising the European infantry and the artillery, were meanwhile working their weary way along the defile. Difficulties confronted them at every step; their road lay in what was little better than the summer-dried bed of a winter torrent; in parts, so choked up with *débris*, or spurs of granite from the hillsides, or boulders washed down from the upper levels, that halts were constantly made to allow the pioneers in advance to clear away the obstructions, over which the men might clamber, but which the mules, though so sure-footed and sagacious, could not, with their little field-pieces and ammunition-boxes slung on their backs, manage to surmount. Thus, in spite of the friendly light of the moon, which as it rose penetrated into the depths of the gorge, their progress was laborious and slow, and the day was beginning to dawn before they had gained the inner entrance of the defile. No little relief was it to them to find themselves at last clear of the narrow gorge, and once more able to breathe freely and look about them.

So far as they could distinguish in the dim light, they could see about a quarter of a mile ahead, looming up in the morning vapour, a walled village

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commanding this gorge. The Brigadier at a glance took in the position; this village must at once be carried. Under the shade of the hills the infantry deployed, and the guns were limbered ready for an attack. A most intelligent native officer of the Guide Corps, who had been selected for this special occasion as belonging to this clan, and knowing every inch of the ground, was sent forward to negotiate with the village. The terms offered were very definite. The men guilty of the recent outrage were to be at once given up, the *málik* (headman) of the village, and the *Khan* (chief of the tribe) were to come out and pledge themselves to peaceful, neighbourly conduct for the future, and then the force should be withdrawn, otherwise the village would be burnt to the ground and all the crops destroyed.

The village was evidently taken by surprise. They had no idea of an enemy at their gates at that hour of the morning. There was some parley: but either the messenger failed to impress upon the village authorities a due appreciation of the strength of the force that had thus dropped down upon them in their fastnesses, or else, as was far from improbable, the *málik* himself had been the leader in the foray. It was clear that they did not mean to accept the Brigadier's terms, for before the Guide message-bearer could reach the English line and report the failure of his negotiations, that failure was announced by the firing of shots from the village walls, and he had to hasten his pace to get out of reach of their bullets.

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So, as they were determined to fight, the order was given for the advance. Out moved the Europeans and the guns from under the shade of the hills, and one or two well pitched shells from the little howitzer soon sufficed to disturb the fancied security of the villagers, for as the shells began to burst among them, and the European line could be distinguished advancing, the Momands might be seen pouring out of the side gates of the village, with their *jezails* slung over their shoulders, and making for a large and more strongly protected village further up the valley. Thus, one village after another—there were three or four forming the group—was speedily cleared out with hardly a show of resistance. The suprise had been complete. That an attack might be made they evidently expected, for not a trace of woman or child could be found in any of the smaller villages; they had been removed out of harm's way into some more remote and secure retreat. But they never dreamt of so sudden an apparition as a force at their gates without a warning signal of its advance from their outpost on the heights.

So, one after another these smaller villages were cleared out without much difficulty and with scarcely any bloodshed. But the larger village with its loftier walls, which had formed the rallying-point of the fugitives, presented a more formidable appearance, and threatened to give more trouble. It stood on ground considerably raised above the general level of the valley, and the ascent was steep, and broken with

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boulders and small spurs of granite. On its gateway and flanking bastions were mounted three or four *jinjals* (native wall pieces), and a goodly show of matchlock-men could be seen lining the walls. Such defences would be insignificant when confronted by even the six-pounders of an English horse-battery, but would be far from contemptible when only native war appliances could be brought to bear on them, and, if properly supplied and worked, would have been no child's play even for the light pieces of a Mountain Battery.

Happily, however, the matchlocks were of antique construction and of short range, while the *jinjals* were most primitive in character, and could not be lowered sufficiently to play upon near objects. So it was decided that a rush should be made to bring the advancing line as speedily as possible inside the line of range from the wall pieces, and then to carry the gate at the charge. The guns opened with a volley, and before the smoke had cleared away the Europeans, and the guns too, had pushed on some sixty yards; another volley, and under cover of the smoke another fifty yards were gained; another volley and another advance, and so by degrees the dangerous interval was passed with scarcely a casualty, and the men were within reach of the gateway.

The gateway looked gloomy defiance; but the matchlock-men had now disappeared from the walls; the *jinjals* had ceased firing, and the advance party found themselves unmolested at the gate. It was a

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ponderous portal, heavily barred and bossed with iron. But the first half-dozen men with a simultaneous rush, shoulder to shoulder, *Beláiti zor se* (with English strength), threw themselves upon it, and the old wooden bar which closed it on the inside snapped asunder, and the double doors creaked on their hinges, and flew open.

Everyone was now preparing for the tug of war —for a murderous struggle; every roof, every door and window, bristling with matchlocks, every inch of ground to be gained by hard fighting—when, to their intense surprise, not a man, not a matchlock, was to be seen; the street was empty, the village too was abandoned. The Momands had fired their last shot from their *jinjals*, and then bolted!

Welcome surprise was it to the poor fellows to find they were spared the hand to hand butchery they had anticipated. Even more welcome the surprise with which they saw in the entrance of the nearest house several *chattis* (water jars) filled with water. After four long hours of marching, and five more of fighting, under a slant but broiling sun, and, to wind up all, that last spirt up the slope, they were well-nigh spent. At the sight of the water they almost blessed the considerate Momands. But luckily for them the *chattis* caught the eye of the young Guide, who had been told off to accompany Colonel Weatherly, and who was entering the gateway by his side. "Sahib! Sahib! *mana kuro!*" (Stop, Sir, stop them!) "*Bish hua!*" (It is poisonous). The Colonel knew hardly a

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word of Hindostani, but the sudden earnestness of the native's manner, the vehemence with which he spoke, convinced him there was some danger. While he was hesitating and trying to understand what the Guide meant, the man sprung forward, and overturned the nearest *chatti*. The Colonel saw his meaning at once, and had just time to rush in front of his men, and with his sword slash and thrust at the frail water jars one after another, and the water was all flowing over the ground before a soldier had tasted a drop. Half-maddened as they were with thirst, many an oath rose to their parched lips, and some found utterance as they saw the water they craved so intensely disappearing into the ground.

But with the advance party rushed in the pet dog of the regiment. A strange animal was "Toby," a well-bred terrier, of whom any dog fancier might be proud; yet no man could claim to be his master; he was nobody's dog in particular; he was the property of the regiment; his home, the Sergeant's mess; his usual place on parade beside the Band Sergeant at the head of the regiment. Nor was this the first time "Toby" had gone "on service," and been under fire —but it was the last! He too saw the *chattis*, and rushed panting for the water; he began to lap it up frantically; in a few moments he staggered, then fell down, then with a convulsive effort sprang on his legs again, reeled, and lay down in agony. The sound of the muttered oaths had scarce died away, and the angry feelings calmed down, ere the men saw

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what an escape they had had; and some who had been loudest to condemn the Colonel for his seemingly unaccountable conduct were first to blurt out, "God bless you, Sir, you have saved our lives!" The men were right; he *had* saved their lives, for the water *was poisoned!* The young Guide knew enough of his *bhai bands* (kinsmen) to be aware that it was no uncommon device with them to try poison on men whom they could not beat in fair fight. The moment he saw the *chattis* so temptingly placed he suspected mischief, and was only just in time to avert it.

Colonel Weatherly now knelt down, and gently stroking the poor dog's head, unfastened the brass collar, which had his name and the number of the corps engraved upon it, to be preserved as a regimental relic. More than one manly fellow would that day have found it difficult to deny that his eyes were dimmer than usual as he turned to look his last on dear "old Toby" in his death gasp.

CHAPTER IV.

A CAPTURE.

ON every such group of Pathan villages the larger one not only boasts its more massive gateway and ramparts, but also contains an inner fortified building, which is conspicuous from a distance with its circular battlemented tower, rising far above

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the adjacent houses, and overtopping the surrounding walls. This building has a double use; it is the *Daolat Khana* (treasury or palace) of the Khan, and also his *boorj* (citadel). Such a tower rose up out of the main street of the village which was being attacked.

Colonel Weatherly came suddenly upon it, as he was working his way at the head of his men, with his Guide companion at his side. The gateway and side walls were freely pierced for matchlocks; and might have given a deal of trouble to the small party of Europeans now approaching it, but its door stood wide open; the basement and the court-yard within were all empty. This too, the stronghold of the place, had been abandoned like the rest of the village. The Colonel was going to pass on; when the trusty "Guide" stopped; he thought he heard the sound of voices. The party entered the basement—but all was still; it must have been a mistake. But what means that little door in the corner standing ajar? The Guide pushed it opened and looked in. All was dark as night—but close by in the wall was a *kirki* or small window, closed with a wooden shutter; the leverage of a couple of bayonets quickly wrenched off the shutter from its fastenings, and the dim light thus let in sufficed to disclose a low vaulted room, and some men skulking against the farther corner. The Guide called on them to surrender, with the promise of their lives, but with the threat that if they resisted they would be shot down in their den. The summons was

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met with a howl of defiance, and a rush at the door. On they came, some half-dozen fiend-like savages, *tulwár* in hand—for they had laid aside their *jezails* when they found it was to be a hand to hand struggle at close quarters—and thought to cut their way through.

But the soldiers, the moment they heard there were men within, had closed in around the Colonel at the narrow doorway, and now met the rush with the bayonet-point; the two leaders received their death thrust, and the others were soon overpowered and disarmed; but not before some ugly wounds had been dealt on both sides, the Colonel himself receiving a severe cut on the left arm in the *melée*.

When all seemed clear, out sprang another from the dark corner, and with his raised *tulwár* tried to cut down the Colonel, who was nearest to him. Half a dozen bayonets were in a moment laid to dispose of him like the rest, when, just in time, the Guide recognised who he was. His dress and whole appearance marked him out as being very different from the gang around. They were the desperadoes of the tribe, while he was the Khan's youngest and favourite son. The young stripling had somehow remained behind in the general stampede, and these *budmashes* (ruffians) had secured his person and hurried him into the cellar of the tower, hoping, no doubt, that when the day's work was over they should reap a rich reward on the ground of having preserved his life.

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There was a certain nobility of bearing about the youth, who, though not above eighteen or nineteen years of age, dealt his blows right manfully. The Colonel, being nearest to him, was the first to receive his attack, and was swordsman enough to parry it. Directly he knew who his antagonist really was, he gave orders that if possible he was to be taken unhurt. It was no easy matter, however, to effect this. Twice he attacked the Colonel, who this time had to thank the thickness of his quilted cap (the summer head-dress of officers and men) that he was only partially stunned, and did not receive a livelong remembrance of the encounter in the shape of an unsightly gash across his left brow. The third time he made a still more vicious cut, but, in the heat of the struggle, over-reached himself, and, before he could recover, Colonel Weatherly struck down his *tulwár* out of his hand, though his own Regulation-sword snapped in two with the blow; then the soldiers rushed in from behind, and secured the lad while disarmed.

There was something of true dignity about his grief at finding himself thus a prisoner in the hands of the *Feringhi*. Nor did the guarantee of his life at all help to reconcile him to his defeat. Close-guarded and pinioned—for with all his dignity of bearing he was in mind little better than a half savage—the young chieftain was escorted by a small body of soldiers to the rear guard of the regiment, until the Brigadier could be informed of the fortunate capture.

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Among the frontier tribes themselves the possession of such a hostage would have soon settled an affray. The captor would be in a position to dictate his own terms when he held in his hands the life of his enemy's heir: for, without hesitation or scruple, that life would be forfeited if the terms, however severe, were not accepted. And although it was well known that in the hands of the English the life of a hostage was always safe, being regarded as sacred, whatever amount of treachery or perfidy might be practised by his tribe, still there were circumstances which, as it turned out, made in this case the life and freedom of this boy of special importance, and consequently the possession of his person by the English of incalculable value, in the final settlement of this raid question.

This exceptional value of the young captive must be explained. It chanced that even in that little rude community "court intrigue" was rife. This boy was, as has been said, the old *Khan's* favourite, and it was generally considered that he was the "heir designate" to the khanship of this distinguished tribe of frontier marauders. But there were other sons by other mothers, who were ambitious of this high honour. On this boy's life, therefore, and his freedom, much depended. Half a dozen other sons might have been taken captive without much regret—nay, the removal of some of the brood might have been a welcome relief to the old parent. But with this lad in the hands of the English a door would at once be

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open to intrigue; rival claims to the succession would be started, each elder brother would become the centre of a *cabal,* and the old man's last days would be embittered by conspiracies, very likely shortened by poison. All this was involved in the capture of this boy—his father's peace, and power, and perhaps life.

We have rather anticipated our story. Colonel Weatherly did not yet know the special value of his prize. It was the Guide's acquaintance with the "Court politics" of his tribe which disclosed it all.

The Colonel having secured his captive, only waited to have a handkerchief tied tightly round his left arm to stay the bleeding from his wound, and then pushed on with his men. A very close scrutiny of every nook and cranny of the tower was now made, and the remainder of the village most carefully explored; and when he was perfectly satisfied that no more of the enemy lay concealed, he moved out "into the open," and joined the Brigadier in the valley, where he was busy working his little guns against the fugitives along the mountain sides.

When the Brigadier heard of the capture and the manner of it, and learned from the young Guide all the domestic history of the Khan we have already given, he exclaimed with generous warmth:

"Well, Colonel, the glory of the day is indeed yours! Your prize is worth his weight in gold, and may be the means of saving many a brave fellow's life to-day. And I think I know enough of these vagabonds to feel sure that when they come to hear

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how the boy was captured, they have still enough of chivalry left in them, in spite of their savagery and fanaticism, to rejoice that their young chief, if he was to be taken—for it is all *kismut* (fate) with them —was taken by a man who knew how to handle his sword. Now, thanks to you, Colonel, I hope we shall get all our poor fellows back under canvas before midnight; for when once the old boy learns we actually have his 'hopeful' in our hands, he won't be long before he comes in and cries *peccavi.*"

CHAPTER V.

THE RECALL.

IT was now considerably past mid-day, and the soldiers were beginning to show signs of flagging; some were dead beat; so, as there was no more pressing work, they were allowed half-an-hour's rest. A village well, with its sacred peepul-tree *(ficus religiosa)* close by, supplied them with friendly shelter and a welcome draught, for the well was not poisoned. There the men lay down on the greensward, munching the hard biscuits they had brought in their haversacks. The little Gurkhas and the Sikhs were still keeping up the game along the heights on either side. For when the enemy had been driven from the last village they had made for the further gorge at the head of the valley, through which they were able to get round, right and left, on the flanks of the skirmishers; and

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this accounted for the occasional shots which were being fired along the ridge, though not a man could be seen from the valley itself.

The capture of the Khan's son seemed to place the real object of the expedition within reach; so the Brigadier sent off a messenger to inform the Khan of the fact, and to warn him that unless the firing ceased the captured villages would be destroyed, and all the standing crops burned; and worst of all, the prisoner would be carried off into British territory. Still the firing did not cease—on the contrary there seemed to be a determination to punish the intruders to the utmost. In the valley itself the casualties had as yet been very few, the chief being among the sufferers from sunstroke. But anyone at all acquainted with frontier incursions knows that the real danger lies not in the advance but in the retreat.

"Revocare gradum, hic labor, hoc opus."

It was now a matter of grave importance to effect that retreat by daylight—at least, to be, if possible, out of the pass before dark; and with the trump card in his hand the Brigadier hoped to be able to play out his game before night closed in upon him. In spite of the desultory firing along the heights, the valley being apparently clear, the bugle sounded "the recall."

Roderick Dhu's whistle shrill

"Garrisoned clan Alpine's glen
With full five hundred men."

For "broom and bracken," "heath and osier" on a Highland hillside, read "boulder and crag, reedy grass

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and scant acacia on a lower Caucasian range," and the scene is again enacted to the life.

That signal to the British troops to retreat, is to the Momand mountaineers a signal to advance—the "recall" to the one is to the other an "advance." No sooner did the Sikhs and Gurkhas begin to retire, no sooner were their backs turned, than, where a minute before not a man was to be seen,

"Sprung up at once the lurking foe."

The crest of either hillside was alive with men; from every crag and every bush curled up the white smoke-wreath of the matchlock, and the unmistakable whiz of the bullet sounded ominously on the ear.

The Brigadier saw at a glance the state of things. Some mishap had befallen his messenger: the tidings of his son's capture had clearly never reached the Khan. Off went the trusty young "Guide," to make sure this time the Khan should not be kept in ignorance of the fate of his son. Meanwhile the little guns were run up the slopes on either side, and ordered to play on any knot of Momands who showed themselves. Behind a crag they would be seen mustering in force—a well-dropped shell just cleared the rock and dropped into the midst, bursting as it dropped, and not a Momand was again seen there. But this play had to be performed time after time, for the "sons of the mountain" seemed ubiquitous.

Now, however, the second messenger fulfilled his mission, and it became evident that the value of the young chief had not been over-estimated. An hour

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after he had started he was seen returning, accompanied by the Khan himself and two or three personal attendants. The old man approached the Brigadier, who moved out ready to receive him. He clasped his hands in supplication, and even prostrated himself, embracing the Brigadier's knees and touching his feet —"doing obeisance," not without dignity, before the man who represented the power he hated, but which, for the time, had mastered him.

All firing had now ceased. The word had passed along the heights. The Khan, walking beside the Brigadier, accompanied the retiring force to the end of the valley, full of promises of good behaviour on behalf of his tribe; and then, as they were closing in on the entrance of the Pass, entreated that his son might be given back to him. But the young hostage was already some way along the defile with the advance-guard, and the old father had no alternative but to accompany the Brigadier, with a strong escort in attendance, through the too familiar gorge towards the hated frontier Fort.

Thus the column moved on undisturbed; the Sikhs and Gurkhas, too, falling back along the heights unmolested; though each spur and crest as they vacated it was occupied by the enemy, who were skulking close on their rear, prepared, no doubt, had the young chieftain been once set free, to set all promises of peace at defiance, and perhaps to decimate the force in the gorge.

But with the boy, and the old Khan too, in the

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hands of the English, not a Momand dared to fire a shot or to raise a finger to the rescue; so they all marched on in safety. It was necessarily slow; guns in front to clear the way if necessary; guns in rear to guard against surprise from behind. But no surprise was attempted; the cost was too great; the life of their chief, and of his son, depending on their remaining quiet—so they allowed the column to pass along in peace, and the skirmishers on the heights to drop down step by step towards the plain; and the short Eastern twilight was just closing in as the rear-guard cleared the mouth of the Pass.

Two hours later and the whole force were once more in camp on the further slope, under the walls of the Fort.

A gathering of the Commanding Officers of the force was at once convened. As soon as the Brigadier had explained the proposed terms of treaty the Momands, father and son, were admitted. It was a touching scene. On one side came in the old Khan, with his venerable white beard and somewhat bent frame, but with undimmed eye of fire; on the other, the stripling boy: both under an escort, or guard, as the case might be, of English soldiers. Their eyes met, and, despite the Moslem training to conceal emotion, the old man's eyes filled with tears as they fell on the pride of his heart, the hope of his house, in the hands of the unbeliever, and saw his face sad and downcast under the sense of defeat and captivity. The terms imposed were at once read. They were not

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hard, but very explicit. Temporary banishment from the Peshawur Valley; all privilege of barter in British territory forbidden, and only to be restored on proof of peaceful behaviour for one year; and after that period heavy penalties to be imposed for any raid on British lands or British subjects.

"Khan," said the Brigadier, when he had stated the terms, "we now know the way into your valley, and you find we have men who can lay the gun and handle the sword. It is your policy to be neighbourly, to remain peaceful, and to control your tribe."

The crestfallen old man bowed, but his dignity never forsook him.

"To-morrow morning," the Brigadier added, "the treaty shall be formally ratified, and you shall go" *(rooksut mileaga)*.

"To-morrow!" cried the Khan in tones of distress; "why not *now?* I accept your terms; let all be settled. The lords of the earth have trampled upon their slave; let him depart and hide his face in the darkness."

"No, Khan; not till to-morrow. With you the shame seems to lie not in the crime, but in the punishment. You shall be protected in camp till the morning; then you can sign the treaty, and take away your son. But be sure you tell your *babas** that if ever they venture to harry us the punishment shall be

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* Literally *children*, but used under the patriarchal system of the East for the "tribe," the "people."

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far more severe. Your homes and your crops are spared this time; but if you make us come again, not a hut shall be left standing, nor an ear of corn remain undestroyed."

Colonel Weatherly, thinking for the moment chiefly of his own men, was half-disposed to urge that the "old ruffian" should be got rid of then. But the Brigadier's reply quite satisfied him.

"It will be better, Colonel, to have half a company kept awake all night for his guard (and you have a few men who have not been out to-day), than to have all the camp kept on the *qui vive* the whole night through—and the poor fellows need rest sadly. With the old boy safe under guard his men will leave us at peace. If they once get him and his son free, they will give us the benefit of their matchlock practice all night, and we shall lose more men before daylight than the whole affair has yet cost us."

So closed the day—its work done, and well done; not the less well that charred huts and smouldering fields did not mark the track of the avenger.

With early dawn the Khan and his son again appeared in the Brigadier's tent; the treaty was signed, and they departed to their mountain homes. The little force broke up that evening, each regiment marching back to its former station, to enjoy (?) the normal quiet of a Punjab hot weather.

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CHAPTER VI.

THE MARCH HOME.

With one portion of this little force, the Mountain Battery, our tale still lies. It is a compact little body, with its half dozen Officers, its European Bombardiers and Non-Commissioned Officers, and its Native Drivers, some two hundred all told. Let us accompany them. The day has been spent under canvas, a welcome shelter after the sweltering heat of the previous day. At sundown the tents are struck; after a refreshing meal in the open, and a hastily snatched hour or two of sleep,—a welcome preparation for a long night's march (for the Indian Mutiny had taught the importance to man and beast of night marches in the months of May and June),—at ten o'clock the trumpet rings out the "advance;" all fall in, and the march begins. In the small hours a halt is sounded; on the roadside an improvised Coffee-shop appears, and the grateful cup of tea or coffee—or a tot of spirits—for the Europeans, and a few puffs at the "hubble-bubble," and a mouthful of water for the natives, refreshes all for another three or four hours' march, before they reach their camping ground, where the tents have already gone on in advance.

But before that is reached the day has broken, and when the sky is glowing red with the refracted rays of the rising sun, a halt is again sounded, and a scene is witnessed which, when seen for the first time,

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cannot fail to strike the most thoughtless. Immediately every Mahometan in the force, and every native Driver in the Battery—as almost every trooper in the Native Cavalry is a Mahometan—is on his knees with his forehead in the dust, offering his morning orison to the rising sun.

To how many a young Englishman may that sight carry a reproach, and teach a lesson, though it come from the too often despised and misguided Moslem. A short halt suffices for this daily act of devotion. The camping ground is at length reached while the sun is still low in the heavens, and as there is now no need for a forced march into Cantonments, a quiet day under a shady Pepal tree is very welcome.

Nor must it be thought that the Mahometans are the only men in such a little camp who have their recognised time for devotion. No sooner is the *haziri* (breakfast) cleared away in the Officers' Mess tent than the native servants appear, each bringing in his hand a Bible and a Prayer Book, which he quietly places before his master, and retires.

No family circle in Old England could more devoutly, one with another, read the daily Psalms and Lessons than do that little band of English Officers in the burning plains of India, thus truly "singing the Lord's song in a strange land."*

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* This is no merely imaginary picture. It is a true account of what the writer has himself witnessed, and that not once or twice, but many times, and knows to be no rare custom among the Officers of Native Corps.

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An Adventure with a Buffalo:

AN INCIDENT OF CANTONMENT LIFE.

HOW rarely do we now-a-days enter an English home where hall or drawing-room does not boast its Indian spoils. Not only do ornamental knick-knacks of ivory, or silver, or silk embroidery, meet the eye, but those more suggestive trophies which tell of hair-breadth "'scapes by field and flood," the tusk of elephant or wild boar, the skin of tiger or bear—the treasured *souvenirs* of some absent kinsman or friend, the very sight of which calls up to the eye of mother or sister the tear of gratitude, as a memento of some merciful deliverance, or makes the heart throb with a sense of pride at the manly development of that boyish spirit which erstwhile found its less formidable victims nearer home in the stubble-field or the rabbit-warren.

Reader, in an old Warwickshire home, of little pretension, but of much English comfort and English happiness, picture to yourselves such a memento—now a priceless relic. It is the head of an Indian buffalo.

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There is nothing remarkable in its size; indeed, as buffalo heads go, it would be called small: it belonged to an occupant of a Punjabi's farmyard, not to a gigantic ranger of a pathless jungle. Yet that massive front, those ridgy shields of bone, layer upon layer, those ponderous horns stretching out right and left, and then curving forwards and upwards, present an undoubtedly formidable appearance: and thereby hangs a tale—as may be gathered from the small silver plate let in at the base of the horns, bearing this inscription:—

"To H. V.,
In token of the life-long gratitude
of C. J."

These initials respectively represent Henry Vincent, Lieutenant and Adjutant, and Charles Jervis, Colonel, of a distinguish regiment then on foreign service in India, and located in one of our important frontier stations in the Punjab. Of each of these Officers, as the heroes of the adventure we are about to narrate, a short account will not be out of place.

Colonel Jervis was a good specimen,—perhaps above the average,—of the English "officer and gentleman" to be found in every regiment in the British Army. With considerable private means, he had commenced his military career in the Guards; he had, as Captain, exchanged into the Line Regiment, in which, in a few years, he had purchased his step, and eventually obtained the command. With his brother officers he was always "the gentleman:" with the

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men a strict but just disciplinarian. And in a very few years, while yet a young man, almost young enough to be the son of the senior Major, he had secured the confidence and respect of all ranks. He had his Regiment admirably "in hand." To strengthen his position, he had an excellent auxillary and ally in his Adjutant.

Henry—or, as he was commonly called, Harry Vincent—had entered the Regiment under somewhat unfavourable circumstances. A near relative was at the time in command. Very soon after he joined, the Adjutancy became vacant, and he was appointed to it, while still an Ensign,—a mere boy,—to the intense disappointment and chagrin of half the Subalterns, who naturally considered that their better claims had been unjustly overlooked. So that at first he was looked on with little favour. Yet there was that in the young Adjutant which soon justified the appointment, and silenced the tongue of jealousy.

Harry Vincent had been a Rugby boy; and though with no pretension or promise of ever rising into the "Upper Sixth," he was a fine specimen of his school. In him was seen to great advantage the better side of the Arnold *régime:* manliness, honour, truth,—manly in mind as in body; a high moral principle, fortified by sound home training of religion, directing and controlling a rich exuberance of animal spirits, and great bodily activity. With him there was "a time to work and a time to play;" and each turn and time found him ready to take his share.

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See him in the Orderly-room,—he was a soldier every inch; see him closeted in his own bungalow with his *munshi*,—he was a most devoted student. Where work was to be done, he was the most hard-working of working bees in the human hive. But, see him with gun on shoulder, or cricket-bat in hand, or "got up" for a Fancy Ball, and you would pronounce him to be one of nature's goodliest butterflies. To say that within a very few years he had become the most popular man in the Regiment, would be to do him scant justice. To say that this young Subaltern, in spite of—with some *because* of—his avowed religious principles, was the most influential, with older men as well as younger, with officers and men alike, would be no exaggeration.

Not that Harry Vincent was without his faults. Who is? But they were after all very trivial in character—rather of manner than intention. A bluntness of speech, a *brusquerie*, would sometimes for a moment give offence; but any painful impression quickly disappeared before the recognition of his sterling worth. To quarrel with him seemed impossible. The charm of his character, the secret of his ascendency, lay in his *reality*. He was *so* REAL!

The Colonel and his Adjutant were firm friends. They had much in common, and a reciprocal appreciation was daily being strengthened between them, when one day, in the end of April, 185—, an event occurred which still more closely cemented their attachment.

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They were both ardent sportsmen; and had waited with some impatience for the time when parades and brigade days should be over, and they could enjoy an early morning's sport among the smaller game which abounded within a few miles of the Cantonments. The leisure time had at last arrived, the spring Inspection was over, the General had "looked at" the Regiment, and a little relaxation for even the Colonel and the Adjutant was now possible.

The two had started off by day-light one fresh morning in the end of April, for a few hours *shikár* (sport) among the partridges and wild ducks which swarmed on the slope of the neighbouring hills, and in the *jheel* (marsh) which spread along at their base. They were returning, for the sun was beginning to be inconveniently warm, and their bags were well filled, to their own satisfaction, and to more than that of the *coolees* (beaters), who were groaning a little under the weight.

As they were working their way home, their route lay through some pasture ground close to a native village where a herd of tame buffaloes were feeding. Coming upon a small clump of brushwood, they parted, to skirt it on either side with the chance of one shot more. When, however, Vincent reached the further end of the clump, instead of finding Colonel Jervis coming up to the same point, to his utter amazement and horror, he heard him shouting out, and saw him making for a *pepal* tree a little distance off, with an infuriated male buffalo in full chase! What had

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happened to offend his dignity,—why the sight of an English sportsman should have suddenly become so obnoxious to him,—there was no telling. It was very clear something had disturbed his equanimity and his ordinary lethargy—for a domesticated buffalo, though far more formidable to look at, is generally as harmless as an English cow—and he had become an undoubtedly dangerous customer.

The Colonel's hope was to reach the *pepal* tree and dodge his enemy round its trunk till Vincent should come to the rescue—for he knew that the small shot in his gun would have no effect on the brute's pachydermic head and shoulders. Vincent hurried up, and was within some thirty yards, when Colonel Jervis's foot caught in a root of the tree that was above ground—he stumbled over it—and fell! The buffalo was upon him! His head was drawn down between his fore legs, his face almost touched the ground, his tail was erect, lashing the air; the points of the horns were already under the body; a moment more, and the Colonel would be tossed up in the air and caught again on those deadly points, or suffered to fall on the ground, and when half dead with the shock, that massive front would be brought down on his victim's chest, and the little remaining life crushed out of him.

Harry Vincent saw it all at a glance. It was a matter of life or death. At the risk of a stray shot hitting the Colonel himself, he raised his gun, and fired. It was a smooth-bore, and the charge was only

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duck-shot; but the aim was good—*a tergo*. The shot found its way into a vulnerable and very sensitive part. A shudder went through the monster's frame; he started, raised his head, not very gently rolling the Colonel's body over in the act, and whirled round to see what had dared to come between him and his victim; fire flashed from his eye; smoke-like, the breath steamed from his nostrils; his sides heaved with fury as he turned. There stood Vincent within five-and-twenty paces, calmly confronting the maddened monster, with gun well poised in hand, ready to give him at all risks the second barrel, should the buffalo transfer the attack to himself. It was a moment of awful suspense. Down went the buffalo's head for the charge: up went Vincent's gun for the second volley; the brute saw the action—and hesitated—seemed to think better of it—raised his head again, thrust out his huge nose, swung sharp round, and with a bellow—such a bellow!—that set the whole herd in a gallop, he tore across the plain, and was soon lost in the adjoining jungle; but not before the second barrel, just to help him on his way, had lodged its contents also in his rear.

On coming up to the Colonel, Vincent found him in sore plight. One horn had penetrated the flesh of the chest, and had lacerated it, while the other had pierced the groin. One moment more, and Colonel Jervis would never again have taken command of his Regiment. Almost carried by Vincent, for the shock had been so great he could hardly walk, he reached the

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Zemindar's hut: where he rested on a *charpoy* (native bed) until a *doolee* (a litter) arrived from the Cantonments, accompanied by the Regimental Doctor. On this he was carried in, and safely lodged in his bungalow, where, after some days of anxiety at the consequent inflammation, his wounds closed up, and he gradually recovered from the effects of the shock.

Naturally the Colonel's escape was the one absorbing topic of conversation at mess that evening; and the Doctor, who alone could give a true account of the affair as he had heard it from Vincent on their way home, was beseiged by eager inquiries. After dinner was ended, and the usual loyal toast "the Queen" had been given, the senior Major, who presided in the Colonel's absence, said, "I am going to give one additional toast to-night, which shall speak for itself, 'Here's to the wounded feelings of the buffalo;' and right glad I am sure we all are he did not succeed in giving promotion in the Regiment." There was no levity in the Major's tone—the deeper feeling which his voice and look betrayed, met with a simultaneous response. Out of order though the toast no doubt was, still more so was the rattling cheer with which it was received; and that cheer found its echo in the sergeants' mess and in every barrack-room of the Regiment, and none questioned the decorum or the sincerity of the feeling it indicated. We may be sure the name of the Regimental favourite, the young Adjutant, also received "honourable mention."

Harry Vincent himself spent that evening, and

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many more after it, in the Colonel's bungalow, where he constituted himself head nurse. In that nursing and that closer intercourse, the friendship between the two was strengthened—why hesitate to avow it?—received from that day a religious character. Colonel Jervis, always a high-principled, honourable man, strove thenceforth after a higher standard of Christian godliness. That adventure became a sacred bond of union.

A week after, the *Zemindar* came into Cantonments with a long face and a long tale of trouble. The buffalo had been wounded not only in feelings, but to the death. At least, inflammation had set in, and he had died; and strong in the belief, which familiarity with the English undoubtedly engenders, that the *Sahib lóg* are wonderfully liberal, even to weakness, when anything like a case of injury can be got up, the *Zemindar* came and asked the Colonel for a present as compensation for the loss of the beast which had nearly been the cause of his own death! However, Colonel Jervis, still laid up from the injury, only smiled at the seeming audacity of the man, and gave him the full value of the buffalo—on condition that the head and horns were sent to him.

A few weeks after, the Colonel's orderly was seen crossing the lines to the Adjutant's bungalow, accompanied by a *coolee* carrying a mysterious-looking parcel wrapped in *gunnee* (coarse canvas). He delivered to the Adjutant's bearer the parcel with a small note, which ran as follows:—

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"My Dear Vincent,—Accept this memento of our Buffalo adventure, from one who can never forget that he owes you his life, *and much more;* and is ever your truly grateful friend, Charles Jervis."

The load, when divested of its wrappings, disclosed the head and horns of the said buffalo with the inscription duly inserted.

Promoted to a place of honour on the wall of Vincent's sitting-room, it from that day was a constant companion of his wanderings from one station to another, and finally to England, where, a few years after, he was sent in broken health.

He reached his old home only to linger a few weeks, and die; and in that Warwickshire home, where his own enfeebled hands had helped to fix it, the buffalo's head remains, a treasured memento of one who was a man for a Regiment to be proud of, a son for a mother to thank God for, a memory for a friend to cherish lovingly.

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How a City Gate was Blown in.

A Tale of the first Cabul War.

WELL had it been for England had the Affghan War of 1839 never been essayed. Well would it be for her honour if all record of that sad campaign could be wiped out of her glorious annals. For it reflected but little credit on the ruling powers by whom it was initiated and mismanaged; yet deeds of daring were then performed, which prove that true chivalry did not die out of the hearts of Englishmen with the ardour of the Crusades or the inspiration of the Tournament. There were episodes which deserve to live in history.

Among these the fall of Ghuznee takes no second place.

In the Ghuznee of the nineteenth Century little remains of the Ghuznee of the tenth. Little is now standing to recall to mind the splendour of the City from which marched forth the heterogeneous hordes of Central Asia under Mahmoud, the first Mohamedan

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invader of Hindostan; nothing but the unpretending tomb of Mahmoud himself, and the two *minars*, or pillars, the supposed landmarks of the great bazaar of the City, to tell even *where* the earlier Ghuznee stood. Eight centuries of warring elements and nations have swept away what was the once celebrated capital of a vast empire, while in its stead have been rising up, by the accumulations of generations, a town, strongly walled and fortified, to serve as an outpost of a younger and smaller kingdom. And it has successfully defied the attacks of Asiatic assailants, and not without warrant proclaimed itself "Ghuznee the Impregnable."

But in June, 1839, it found itself surrounded by something far more formidable than an ordinary Asiatic force. "The Army of the Indus" had encamped before it.

The tale of this disastrous campaign has been well told in all its "epic completeness." It is enough here to remind the reader of the circumstances which led to this advance on Ghuznee. Russia was again supposed to be meditating an attack on India, and must be met, or out-manœuvred. Persia was suspected of conniving, if not co-operating, and must be cowed; and Cabul, lying between the Czar and the coveted possessions of England in the East, must be utilised as a "non-conducting medium." But how could this be best done? Some there were, wise men and experienced in Asian politics, and at their head Alexander Burnes, who said, "The Affghans as a nation are friendly to us, and the ruler of their own choice, the Amir *de facto*, Dost

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Mohamed, if only England made it worth his while, (and that could be done at half the cost of setting up any one against him), would abandon Russia and Persia in our favour." But there were others who inclined to the more daring and desparate course of deposing the Dost, and replacing on the throne of Cabul Shah Sujah, whom they were pleased, by a legal fiction, to designate as the Amir *de jure*, and who, after having been driven from Cabul by the people, had been for some years living a pensioner at Loodiana, under British protection. In an evil hour the advocates of the latter policy prevailed. The disowned ex-Amir Shah Sujah, was to be reinstated *vi et armis*, in defiance of the wishes of his own nation, and kept upon the Throne by foreign bayonets and foreign gold, in the hope that he would prove a grateful ally, and an effective barrier to England against the anticipated aggressions of Russia.

Now the most direct route to Cabul lay across the Punjab and through the Khyber Pass. But old Runjeet Singh was fast waning in power and in prestige, as well as in health, and the surging tide of insubordination, which nothing but the traditional strength of his individual will kept back as with a flood-gate, would, on his death, inevitably burst all bounds and overwhelm "the land of the five rivers" with a deluge of rebellion and bloodshed. He himself felt this. For some time he had found that even with the aid of his trenchant European Lieutenants he could hardly restrain the turbulent *Khalsa* (Sikh army).

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He could now give no guarantee of safe transit to the British troops; so it was resolved that the advance should be made by the southern route, through the Bolan Pass. By this arrangement also another end was gained; the junction and combined action of the Bombay Contingent would be greatly facilitated. Ferozepore, on the Sutlej, was the muster-place for the Bengal troops. There Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, and the "old Lion of the Punjab," met, and amid all "the pomp and circumstance" of reviews and durbars, the "Grand Army of the Indus" was to be wafted onward on its way by their joint aspirations and mutual good wishes. But, while still encamped at Ferozepore, tidings came that the fears about the great northern bugbear had passed away; the political horizon was clearing; the clouds of suspicion and alarm were blowing over.

Yet, though the occasion had virtually ceased,—for the anticipated danger had disappeared,—there were in the Camp, or rather in the Council Chamber, men whose personal vanity and ambition were too much involved to reconcile them now to any retrograde movement. The advance into Cabul must on no account be abandoned; the *éclat* of such an expedition could not be foregone; Shah Sujah must be borne back in triumph into his own ancestral City.

Jacta est alea. The Army, though greatly shorn of its originally proposed strength, moved slowly down, crossed the Indus, worked its weary way through the Bolan Pass, pushed on for Candahar, which it occupied

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without firing a shot; and then, doubling back in a northerly direction, presented itself before the walls of Ghuznee.

Great was the consternation within the Citadel when, on the morning of July 21st, the Governor of the Fort, Hyder Khan, a son of Dost Mohamed, received the announcement that the enemy were at their gates. The whole plain to the south was covered; while they had remained within utterly unconcious of the danger. So confident were they that from Candahar the British Army would advance by direct route for Cabul itself, leaving Ghuznee for some future time, that even the Light Cavalry, which would have been invaluable as scouts, or to harass the flanks of the advancing force, were safely shut up within the City. So the British troops took up their ground on the west, just beyond range from the walls, without having encountered a single enemy. Later in the day, however, a movement was perceptible in the Camp. The tents were no sooner pitched than they were being struck; the Infantry were seen filing along over the lower hilly ground which lay on the north of the City; while the Artillery, and the Cavalry having the line of baggage camels in escort, were lost to sight, as they took a wider circuit along the level ground behind the range of hills. In due time, however, all re-appeared on the eastern side, and there began to settle down for the night, the Camp apparently facing north. From this change of ground (to be explained by and by) it was inferred by Hyder

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Khan that there was a change of plan, and that, without delaying to attack Ghuznee, the force would still make for Cabul.

If the consternation had been great in the City at the sudden appearance of the Army, which they thought was miles away, scarcely less grave the effect on the minds of the English by the appearance of the walls of the Fort. "When we came before it on the morning of the 21st July," says the Chief Engineer of the force in his Official report, "we were very much surprised to find a high rampart, in good repair, built on a scarped mound about thirty-five feet high, flanked by numerous towers, and surrounded by a *fausse braye* and a wet ditch." And a closer reconnoitre only revealed more fully the strength of the place. In front of each gateway was erected a massive screen of masonry, and the gates themselves were bricked up, while the ditch which surrounded the whole City was filled with water of unknown depth, only known to be utterly unfordable; and on the right bank of the river, which flowed close by, an outwork had been built, which completely commanded the ditch on the western and southern flanks. This was no pleasing sight for any Army unprovided for a siege. All the siege-train and heavier guns had been unaccountably left at Candahar; they could bring nothing but nine and six-pounder light field-pieces into the field; and as for sitting down for a systematic investment, with all the tedious processes of mines and parallels for approaching and breaching the walls,

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this was out of the question; for Cabul must be reached as soon as possible.

In this dilemma, a Council of War was necessary. A passing notice of the several leading Officials in the Camp who would compose it, will enable the reader to understand better the line each is here supposed to take. Sir John Keane was in command of the whole force; for on the resolution to reduce its strength before leaving Ferozepore, Sir H. Fane, the Commander-in-Chief, had declined the curtailed honour of accompanying it. Sir W. Macnaghten, a high Bengal civilian, was attached to it as British Envoy and Minister. Alexander Burnes, a young Bombay Officer, but already a distinguished diplomatist, whose personal acquaintance with Cabul rendered his presence of the greatest importance; and besides these the several Brigadiers and Colonels of Regiments, and the Chief Engineer of the Force. In attendance also was Mohun Lall, a Hindoo, held in high esteem by Burnes, having accompanied him in his previous embassy to Cabul and Bokhara, and now on the Envoy's Staff.

The Council met in the General's tent. On some faces there was a gloom; for they had just found themselves face to face with a difficulty for which they were little prepared. The discussion on the course to be adopted had scarcely commenced, when the Envoy announced that an Affghan of high birth and great intelligence had just joined the Camp. He was a nephew of the Amir of Cabul, and had been won over by the seductive persuasions of Mohun Lall,

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who had kept up a secret correspondence with him ever since they had become acquainted at Cabul. This man, Abdool Reshed Khan, had just deserted from Ghuznee, and stolen into Camp, and was now prepared to give the fullest information regarding the condition of the Citadel.

"Prepared to betray his cousin, and to play his uncle false," whispered Captain Outram, of the Shah's Body Guard, into his neighbour's ear. "A *pakka* Affghan he!"

"I would," said the Brigadier addressed, turning to Burnes, who sat on the other side of him, "I would that the Envoy would not be so fond of indulging his almost Asiatic proclivity for intrigue."

"Well, I am thankful," replied Burnes, who still to some extent resented the subordinate position in which he was placed to the ambitious civilian, "if Dost Mohamed, the fine, manly fellow, Affghan though he be, is to be kicked out, I am thankful some one else has the doing of it. We might have a much worse man there than he; and I fear we shall have it in your friend, the Shah."

"Don't call him my friend," said the Brigadier deprecatingly. "The Governor-General offered me the command of the Contingent, and I have, I hope, learnt that part of a soldier's duty, to obey without questioning."

While these remarks were passing, the Affghan had been introduced, and now was seated in their midst, accompanied by his sponsor, Mohun Lall. He

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was a large muscular man, but with a sinster expression: a furtive glance wandered around to see how he was regarded, and he was physiognomist enough (all natives are) to see that he was but coldly welcomed. However, he had adopted his *rôle*, and he carried it through. Gently and cleverly drawn out by the Envoy, the man told them that the Fort was very strong—considered impregnable; that every gate had been bricked up except one, and that was on the opposite side, towards Cabul, and called the Cabul Gate, that it remained open not only as a means of ordinary ingress and egress, but also because a considerable force with supplies was daily expected to arrive from Cabul. Having given such information he was allowed to retire. He had scarcely left the tent, when opinions were freely expressed regarding "the traitor—Affghan all over." The soldier-spirit of the Brigadier revolted at the thought that we were to be in any way indebted for success to such a renegade. Young Outram, of the Shah's Body Guard, could not contain himself. He said aloud, "Treason never can prosper."

"Excuse me," said the Envoy, with a blandness of tone which contrasted strongly with the haughty sneer with which he thought to annihilate the young Officer;

> "'Treason doth never prosper. What's the reason?
> Why when it prospers, none dare call it treason.'"

"I only hope," chimed in Burnes, "that if the Envoy is to reap the proverbial fruits of treason, he

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may have the enjoyment of it all to himself, and not compel any of us to taste its bitterness. Not that I wish him to find himself 'Caught as a woodcock in his own springe;' or the Engineer 'hoist with his own petar.'"

Words of prophetic omen they were! Within two years both Burnes and the Envoy, and the greater part of the force, had miserably perished before Affghan treachery, and among the very few of that Council who escaped was the young Outram, whose principles of Christian chivalry sustained him through life.

"One hint, gentlemen," said the General, "we may take from our Affghan visitor. We are clearly on the wrong side of the City. If we move round, we shall command the only open gate they have, and be able to intercept the succours coming in from Cabul."

So far the Council had not sat in vain. And by the decision at which they then arrived may be explained the movement of the Camp, which had for the time been, under misapprehension of its object, a relief to the Garrison.

Early the next morning, one of the Subalterns of the Engineers, by name Durand, came into the Chief Engineer's tent, and suggested, with much modesty, that as the ordinary sapping and mining and breaching were out of the question, it might be worth the trial to carry the Cabul gate by a *coup*. He himself (he said) had gone down in the dead of night, and found that this gate was clear; the bridge over the

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ditch was all right; there were several angles in the sorties where the storming parties might stand under cover; and within three hundred yards of the walls there were grand positions for pushing on guns. All that was needed was once to blow open the gate. A few bags of powder (he said) placed close to the gates would effectually demolish the woodwork, and the storming parties might effect an entrance before the men inside knew what was going on. The Chief Engineer, an older, and therefore, perhaps, a more cautious man, pronounced it a bold stroke; but thought it was feasible, and promised to think it over, and lay it before the General when the Council met again at noon. Durand said, "I would only make one stipulation, Major, which is, that as the idea is mine, and I have examined the ground, I should be allowed to make the venture. You know, I am the senior Subaltern also."

At noon, the Council again met, and a sense of relief seemed to pervade all; for the Affghan deserter was not there. The project was now brought forward.* Its novelty and its boldness at first told against it; but on mature consideration it found general favour. It was resolved that the attempt should be made, and *that very night,* while the

* Hence has arisen some doubt as to who was really entitled to the credit of originating it. Some friends of the Chief Engineer have claimed it for him, as it was brought forward by him; but it is generally, and with more justice, accorded to Durand, the man who, thirty years after, so suddenly closed a brilliant career as Sir Henry Durand, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

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Garrison were still deluding themselves with the idea that the force was only halting *en route* for Cabul, and were unprepared for any attack.

That afternoon, all the necessary orders were issued. The positions were assigned to the several batteries, to be taken up in the dead of night: every Regiment told off for its particular duty: the Light Companies of H.M. 2nd and 17th to form the storming party; and the rest, with the other Corps, to be distributed in the advancing columns and reserves. Sickness had considerably reduced the effective strength of the force: dysentery, fever, and jaundice had sent a large number on the sick list; yet, when the rumour reached the Hospital that the attack was to be made, the sick forgot all their maladies and their weakness in their impatience to take part in the assault. The scene there passing will be best told by one who witnessed it.

"On the evening before the storm my duty led me to prepare the Field Hospitals, and to arrange for the expected casualties. On visiting the Hospital Tents of H.M. 2nd and 17th Regiments, I was surprised to find them cleared of sick! The gallant fellows had all risen in mutiny against their Surgeons, and insisted on joining their comrades. None remained in Hospital but the hopelessly bed-ridden, who literally could not crawl, and even of these a portion, who could just stand and walk, were dressed, and made to look like soldiers, to take the Hospital guard. No effective

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man could be kept away. This incident is invaluable for history."*

A kindred spirit pervaded the whole force. At midnight, the Batteries and Regiments began to take up their positions. At three o'clock,—the darkest stillest hour before dawn,—a small knot of gallant young Englishmen were moving out from the cover behind which the Batteries had been placed, and supports planted. In advance, occupying by right the post of honour, appeared Durand, carrying his bag of powder, and followed by half-a-dozen of the 13th similiarly laden. The walls were alive with men; for, in spite of all the efforts to avoid observation, the enemy saw something was in the wind, and lined the ramparts, blazing away into the dark. Torches fringed the parapets to enable the men to see what was going on; but happily they were so placed as to throw all their light on the more distant objects, casting the ditch and the sorties and the gateway itself, into all the deeper shade. Thus the advance was made in safety.

So utterly unconscious were the enemy within of the form of danger that was threatening, that when Durand reached the gate, he could, through a chink, see the sentries inside, squatting on the ground, and smoking their *hookahs* unconcernedly. Amid the din of the guns,—for all the Batteries had opened fire,—

* Dr. Kennedy's "Campaign of the Army of the Indus," vol. ii. p. 46. To whose pages the writer desires to acknowledge his obligation for many minor incidents of the siege.

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and the rattle of matchlocks and muskets, the men advanced, deposited their powder bags, and retired under cover, without being noticed. Now was the critical moment. Durand, having adjusted the hose, and with some difficulty lighted the port-fire, himself got safely back to cover, when, with a terrific report, the powder exploded, the door was shattered to pieces, and some of the masonry also brought down with the shock. But not a man was hurt, with the exception of one Engineer Officer, in command of the carrying party, who, having incautiously exposed himself, was shaken by the concussion. There was a dead lull for some moments: not a foot stirred! All was expectation for the bugle to sound the advance; but, by some mishap, the Bugler was not to be found. A very few moments, however—though they seemed hours—and the signal was given. With a cheer the storming party sprang from under cover, and were in the gateway; and before the sun rose the English flag floated on the Fort of Ghuznee.

That night a Council of War had also been held in the City; and Hyder Khan had proposed that as an attack was threatened, the women and children should be removed to some place of safety. The explosion at the gate broke up the Council, and the City, men, women, and children were at the mercy of the conqueror. Yet, to the amazement of the Affghans themselves, not one woman or child suffered insult or injury knowingly by the *Kaffir* soldiers.

Mohamed Hyder Khan, the Governor of the Fort,

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surrendered: and his life was promised him. He was at once made over to the charge of Burnes, whose chivalrous spirit rejoiced in showing how brave men deserve to be respected even in their fall. As for the traitor Reshed Khan, he remained in Camp, an object of general contempt and suspicion, for

"Treason is but trusted as a fox."

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A CIVILIAN IN CAMP;

Or, A Tale of Baraḍuree Justice.

INDIA has its stern realities as well as its dash of romance; yet so closely are they knit together, it is often difficult to disconnect them; so interwoven in the loom of life, it is difficult to trace out the separate warps which make up the checkered woof. Nor must it be thought that the soldier's is the only career in which occur such stirring scenes, in which deeds of daring or of nerve are possible, in which perils by field or flood are to be met with. The civilian, too, encounters them even in the ordinarily monotonous routine of his *cutcherry** work. And in such instances, perhaps, the excitement is all the greater because it is the less expected. It rises up, as it were, out of the surrounding realities of his every-day life—a romance more thrilling than fiction can invent.

It is to men who are familiar with this phase of

* *Cutcherry* is the Hindostani word for the Judicial Court of a District.

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Indian life that doubts present themselves as to the advantages of the high intellectual competition system which has of late been extended to India. They doubt if this system is the best suited for ensuring and developing those stronger traits of character which are needed for the effective administration of a half-savage frontier district. They doubt if the boys who at school have worn out the seats of their breeches in study rather than the toes of their boots at football, or the soles of their shoes in hurdle-racing or hare and hounds, are the material out of which the best men can be made for ruling a tract of country, perhaps the size of half-a-dozen English counties, on the very outskirts of civilisation. In the old long-established "Regulation Provinces," as they are called, under the maternal watchfulness of a High Court to prescibe and enforce the narrow line of precedent, from which the young Official strays at his peril, possibly the head knowledge resulting from a long laborious process of "cramming" may suffice; but plant such a man on the rough roadless tracts of Central India, or the wild frontier of the Punjab, and ten to one he proves a lamentable failure. His boasted pre-eminence of book-learning is lost in a mediocrity of common sense and practical usefulness.

No doubt the Competition system has given to India some very distinguished specimens of its class. But they belong, with very few exceptions, to the first years of the system, when the English Universities gave up their best men for the Indian Civil Service:

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and these men are to be found already rising to honourable distinction in the Secretarial departments of the several Presidencies, which always command the pick of the Service. Still, for the ordinary rough and ready life of a frontier tract of country, the mere head-learning which places some men high on the list of their year stands them in very little stead when they have to deal with men and motives instead of books.

These are the posts which offer the severest crucial tests of men's powers. Suppose a murder or a *dacoity* (robbery) has been committed some miles away from the central Civil Station of the district. It is in the hands of natives for investigation; a stupid native policeman has to collect the evidence; a *jemadar* (native officer) of police, less stupid, but more crafty, has to put the evidence together; a *thanadar* (police inspector, also a native) has to receive charge of the prisoner, and to take care the witnesses are present for the first investigation before the young English Civilian. The victim was probably a poor man, or a feeble woman; the perpetrator of the crime a man of some wealth and local influence. Some hours, perhaps even days, must elapse before the case, duly manipulated through its intermediate stages, comes up. When the day is fixed, lo and behold, the witnesses don't appear; or if they do, their memories as to the facts have become suddenly very confused, and the case of course breaks down, and the prisoner escapes scot-free,—in person, though not in purse,—for

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doubtless it has cost him a round sum to buy off witnesses and police. The young magistrate has all through acted most conscientiously; he has listened attentively to the tediously prolix evidence, so far as his knowledge of the vernacular, gained by book learning, has enabled him to follow it. He has weighed the evidence in strict accordance with the principle of Indian precedents and the Penal Code; and he is satisfied there is not sufficient evidence for conviction; though the suspicion is undoubtedly strong against the prisoner, there is no case to send up to the judge, still less whereon to stand if it be carried up on appeal to that dread tribunal—the High Court. So he has no alternative but to let the man off. Thus the wrong is not righted, and justice has lost a victim.

Now contrast the foregoing process with such a scene as this, which is not altogether an imaginary one. In the far North-West on an evening in May, a Magistrate and his young Assistant are sitting together on a *chambutra*, a raised terrace to be found in almost every Indian garden. They are smoking their cheroots and enjoying a game at chess, so far as enjoyment is possible with a cloudless sky innocent of the faintest breath of air, and a thermometer above ninety at sunset. A *sowar* (mounted native policeman) comes tearing up the avenue, dismounts, and reverently presents to the *burra sahib* (the great gentleman)* a

* The term by which a Magistrate is ordinarily described.

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packet enclosed in a large envelope of coarse greasy-looking native-made paper. It contains a report of a brutal murder having been committed in a remote village some dozen miles off. The body of the victim was discovered soon after noon by the side of a ditch: violence had evidently been used. The *lumberdar* (head man of the village) had discovered it; and said that he saw a man, whom he described exactly, stealthily creeping away from the spot in the direction of the village. This man had been arrested in his house, as the probable murderer, and was locked up in the *thana* (police-office cells). The *thanadar* reported the circumstances, and requested instructions.

"Now, Jones," said Thornbury the Magistrate to his young Assistant, who was quite a *griff*, and had only a few months before been appointed to district work, after having passed his examination with fair credit in Calcutta. "Now, Jones, here's a chance for you; be off by daylight in the morning. The place is only some dozen miles across country, and you may be on the tract before the sun is up. The *sowar* will act as your guide. You have only one horse, ride him the first stage; I will have a relay placed for you half way."

"I should be very glad; only, you see, I'm no rider. I couldn't go across country. I might break my neck," replied Jones, nervously, with a ghost of a smile.

"Well," said Thornbury, "that's a pity; but I'll have my *buggy* ready for you by three in the morning; and even by the road it won't be much above two hours' drive.

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"But," replied poor Jones, even more timorously, "I am no hand at driving; and I know yours are skittish horses. Could not I go in a *palki* (palanquin)?"

"What!" replied the Haileybury man, with some warmth and a good deal of contempt, "waste five hours in getting together your bearers, and spend five more on the road! If that's your only safe mode of travelling, you'd better not think of going. It's my morning for visiting the gaol; but I'll go myself, and may still be back time enough for that."

Thornbury did go; and Jones felt small; and devoutly wished a few lessons in a riding school had formed a more important part of his education, for he felt he had sadly fallen in the estimation of his chief, whose tendency towards muscular Christianity made him fail to appreciate those fruits of the midnight-oil labours which were to regenerate India.

Thornbury went. He was in the village before a soul was astir, made straight for the spot where the *sowar* said the body had been found, groped about with his riding-whip in the ditch, and at length feeling something hard, hooked it out, and found it to be a small hatchet, evidently the instrument with which the murder had been committed. This was recognised as belonging to the *lumberdar*, the very man who had cast suspicion on the poor coolie. Thornbury, then, accompanied by the *thanadar*, whom he had aroused from his slumbers, went to the *lumberdar's* house, showed him the hatchet, at the sight of which the wretched man quailed; detected marks of blood on

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his dress, which could not be satisfactorily accounted for; and had him at once arrested. Witnesses now came forward, who had been tongue-tied from fear of the man of power, and told how there had been a long-standing *zid* (ill-feeling) between the *lumberdar* and the murdered man, about a small plot of ground which the wealthy neighbour coveted; how threats had been often uttered; how the two men had been seen together that forenoon, and high words had passed. Thus evidence came pouring in on every side, some probably greatly exaggerated to meet the supposed wishes of the magistrate, but enough undoubtedly true to convict the *lumberdar* of the murder. He was at once consigned to the *thana*, while the poor innocent *coolie* on whom he had cast suspicion was set free; and Thornbury was back again in his own bungalow in time for a late breakfast, ravenous after his long ride, and well satisfied with his morning's work. Nor did the gaol lose its usual visit. So much for physical power and energy as elements of usefulness in Indian administration.

"I do half the work of my district in my saddle," once said to the writer one of the best Judicial Officers India ever had.

The last Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, Sir John (afterwards Lord) Lawrence, whose own noble roundhand, so indicative of his character, is still well remembered in the land of the Five Rivers, once insisted on legible writing being one qualification for civil employment in his province. Would not the

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Sir Gregory Hardlines of the day do well to require the ability to ride fairly to hounds over a stiff bit of Irish stone-wall country, as one of the tests for the Indian Civil Service Examination?*

The present system may, and probably does, give better-filled brain-pans; but it is a grave question if it is not robbing the country of the necessary amount of muscle and manliness.

* * * * * *

But to be true to our second title (for we seem to have somewhat digressed from it, and the subject it more directly suggests), let us resume our tale.

The word *báraduri* literally means "twelve doors." It refers to the form of the house in which the native magnates under Mohammedan rule used to hear causes, and has come to be commonly used to describe the open, prompt, just, and equitable administration of justice it has been the endeavour of the English Government to introduce into the more recently

* This Story appeared in the July Number of "Good Words," of 1871, and by a singular coincidence there appeared in the "Bengal Government Gazette," under date July 2nd of the next year, a Notification from the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (Sir G. Campbell), that in all future examinations for the Uncovenanted Civil Service every Candidate for an appointment in India should, among other qualifications, be required to prove that he can "ride not less than twelve miles at a rapid pace, and is in this respect competent for all practical purposes of district work." Our Story (be it remembered) refers to Civilians in the Covenanted Service, sent out from England, regarding whom a similar qualification is supposed to be required; but any one who has had even a few months' experience of life in the rural districts of India will have witnessed many instances in which this test (*a fortiori* more important in their case) has been very laxly applied.

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annexed provinces. A *báraduri* consists of a spacious centre room with enclosed verandah on all four sides, each side having three doors, thus ensuring ventilation, a supreme object in India, and theoretically ensuring publicity, the Official seated in the middle of the centre room, and being accessible by any one of the twelve doors. It were undoubtedly a suggestive sight, a Judge sitting with open doors on every side, accessible to all alike, with an ear for every complaint, and an arm strong enough to punish, and to punish promptly, eager to right every wrong. A noble idea, truly, in theory,—but under native rule it only existed in theory, for the freedom of access and the consequent publicity had quite disappeared before the troops of myrmidons who guarded the doorsteps and the doors, and allowed no one to enter without *bukshish* (some bribe). Thus what had been originally designed to be a protection against oppression became under native rule a means of most iniquitous extortion; and it does so become, too, under English rule, unless the strictest watch is kept on the native officials, inside and out, and condign punishment be inflicted in every case of detected imposition.

In the construction of modern buildings designed for Courts of Justice in India this idea is necessarily very much lost sight of from the complicated machinery of *babus* and *peons* (writers and men in waiting). But to see it to the best advantage one should accompany a Civilian during his cold-weather tour through his district; and see him day after

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day sitting in his *shemianah* (large open tent without any side curtains), a few officials squatted around him, the body of them being in adjoining tents or in the open air outside. There he sits, visible from every side, ready to hear every case.

Such a life, independently of the sentiment attaching to it, is full of interest, sometimes of romance, and not always free from danger, as the following incident will show.

A Civilian, we will call him Jacobson, was in charge of one of the extreme frontier districts as Deputy Commissioner.* According to annual custom, he was taking his cold-weather tour in the year 185—, and had reached the very borders of English territory. He was encamped within easy reach of one of the largest frontier military stations, close to a fine tract of shooting-ground, which, however, was rarely visited by sportsmen from its dangerous proximity to the adjacent hills, on which were tribes with whom neither property nor life would be safe. However, under guard of the Deputy Commissioner's Camp and escort, a little shooting might be safely indulged in. So Mr. Jacobson had invited over a few friends from the neighbouring Cantonment with the promise of a few days' good sport. They had done credit to themselves among the small game which ever swarm in such tracts of what may be called "debateable ground,"

* This title, be it known to the uninitiated, represents in a Non-Regulation province the double functions, Judicial and Financial, of a Magistrate and a Collector in the older provinces.

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lying, like the marches of old on the northern and western borders of England, between our territory and that of a neighbour, but not over-neighbourly, native chief. On the morning on which they were to part, his friends to return to the station and its duties, he to move farther away to his next Camping-ground, one of them, a close personal friend, noticed that Jacobson appeared unusually depressed, and half-jokingly alluded to it. When they were alone, Jacobson said to him, "I dare say you will laugh at me, Wilkins; but I had a strange dream last night, which I cannot shake off. I have gone where I know you would have gone for comfort and guidance; still the impression remains. I dreamt I saw my good mother, on whom these eyes have not rested for seven long years, come into my tent and kneel down, and the tears were rolling down her cheeks as she was praying. The only words I can remember her saying were, 'Give Thy angels charge over him!' These words are ringing in my ears. I have a presentiment that some great danger is before me; but I believe that I shall be preserved. From what quarter I have no idea, so I do not know how to avoid it. I shall go on as usual with my day's work, and leave all in higher hands." Wilkins tried to reason him out of his forebodings: but in vain.

They parted after breakfast, and Jacobson set himself in earnest to clear off the work that remained, before moving on to the next group of villages.

Under the succession of cases which came up before him, the dream of the night before had almost

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passed away; and, his work done, his Camp was struck, and he started off for his next Camping-ground, accompanied not only by his usual escort of two *sowars* (mounted native policemen), but also by the *ressaldar* (native officer) of the troop, and three or four other *sowars*, who joined him *en route*. About half way between the two Camps, on the route he had to take, there rose up abruptly from the plain, nearly half a mile away from the foot of the hills, a large rock, some thirty feet high, with abrupt sides and jagged crest. When he was within a few hundred yards of it, cantering along carelessly, and chatting to the *jemadar*, at his side, a gleam of light flashed out from behind this rock, and for the moment dazzled all the party. Jacobson's horse, a mettlesome Arab, started, and swung sharp round; the saddle-girths gave way with the strain, the saddle slipped round, and he, good rider though he was, fell, and, being a large man, fell heavily, on his right side. He sprang to his feet, having never let go the bridle, and tried to remount, when he found his right arm perfectly powerless. He had evidently broken his collar-bone. With the help of the *sowars* he got into his saddle, and instead of going on to his Camp, turned off towards Cantonments, to have his arm doctored.

The *ressaldar* meanwhile, attracted by this mysterious gleam, carried off some of his *sowars* and galloped round the rock,—giving it a wide berth for safety's sake,—to see what had caused the flash. As he rounded the rock, he saw three men mount their

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horses, and tear away towards the hills. He was too far behind, and they too well mounted, to admit of his cutting them off, so they made good their retreat, and were soon lost in the *nullahs* (ravines), where it would have been madness to follow them.

It was now clear there had been an ambuscade; and, while one of the men was bringing down his matchlock to be ready for a shot at the Deputy Commissioner as he passed (which he would have done), within range from the rock, the slant rays of the setting sun had glinted off the polished barrel, and betrayed the plot.

The *ressaldar*, after having gone on to Camp to place the guards for the night, rode into Cantonments, and told what he had seen, and what an escape they had had; for these men use their matchlocks with deadly effect. Later in the evening, Wilkins, having heard of the accident, came to see Jacobson, whose first words were, "Wilkins, I feel I owe my life to my mother's prayer."

But the danger was not yet over. Three days after, Jacobson, having insisted on going out to Camp again, had consented to play the invalid so far as to go in a *palki*. Some hours had been spent in hearing cases of disputed boundaries and rival claims to land, and such-like suits. He had left the *shemianah*, in which he had been holding open Court, and had thrown himself into an easy-chair in his own tent, for he still felt the effects of the fall, as an expression of pain in his face, as well as his tightly-bandaged arm, testified. He was

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thinking carefully over some cases he had been hearing. One especially puzzled him. It was a dispute between two men belonging to a village on the very border, which was a noted nest of turbulent, disaffected, intriguing Pathans. The strange feature of this case was, that, despite a strong array of witnesses (who had clearly been brought in from the nearest *pepal* tree to give evidence as instructed), neither party had a particle of documentary proof to offer in support of their claims. Indeed, so confused and contradictory were their own statements, that it became doubtful not merely whether they had any claim to it, but whether the plot in dispute had any real existence. Jacobson, to clear the doubt, had adjourned the case, and instructed an official on whom he could rely to go over in the morning and inspect the ground. He had noticed during the proceeding of the case how the eyes of these disputants had been constantly wandering about, more intent on what was passing around than on the turn their own case was taking. One of them in particular, with a more villainous expression of face than the others, had been furtively scanning the tent, and watching every movement of the attendants standing about. Jacobson was thinking over this case, and the strangeness of those men's manner, wondering what possible motive they could have for trumping up such a case. What object had they? for, though appearing as rival claimants, there seemed some secret understanding between them. All this was passing through

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Jacobson's mind as he lay back in his easy-chair, smoking his cheroot, with his eyes half-closed.

The servants had all withdrawn, to leave their master in peace, and the passing of the *sepoy* on guard across the tent door, as he paced to and fro on his beat, was the only sign of life. Suddenly he became conscious that some object was obstructing the doorway. He looked up, and saw a man advancing towards him, holding a paper in his left hand, as if about to present a petition, while his right hand seemed to be concealed in the folds of his *chuddah*. The man's presence there, unsummoned and unannounced, was in itself strange; the use of his left hand stranger still; for a native can hardly pay a greater insult to his superior. Jacobson raised himself in surprise, and was going to speak, when the man suddenly drew a *tulwar* (native sword) from under his *chuddah*, and made a spring at him as he lay. A moment more, and it would have been too late. Jacobson would have been cut down in his chair, and the ruffian no doubt would have escaped in the confusion of the Camp. But Jacobson took it all in. He seized his revolver, which was lying on the table by his left hand,—for since Colonel Mackeson's death at Peshawur, some months before, all officials on the frontier had revolvers at their side day and night. There was a flash—a groan—and a heavy fall! Jacobson had fired. The bullet entered just above the eye, below the folds of the turban; and the would-be murderer fell, clutching his *tulwar*, two feet from his

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intended victim! At the report of the pistol the guard sprang in, the servants rushed into the tent, to find how nearly their master had been sacrificed to their carelessness in allowing a stranger to steal into his tent.

The man was at once recognised as having been the claimant in the strange suit of the morning. Where were the others? They had been standing under a tree close by where Jacobson's horses were picketed. At the sound of the discharge they knew something had gone wrong—it was time to be off. They each sprang at a horse, cut the heel and head ropes, and were in the act of springing on their bare backs, and would have escaped with their lives and their spoil into the friendly hills, had not the *ressaldar* come at the moment into Camp with some of his *sowars;* seeing what was going on, he rushed upon the men, tore them off their horses, pinioned and disarmed them before they could use *tulwar* or pistol, and brought them at once into Jacobson's tent.

With the recklessness of fanatics,—for they turned out to be *Ghazees* (Mohammedan devotees, pledged to kill the Kaffir), with nothing to hope for from man—nothing to fear, but everything to look for from heaven, so their creed assured them—they told their tale unflinchingly, though every word was tightening the halter round their necks. They had made up this fictitious suit to get access into the Deputy-Commissioner's Camp, to watch their opportunity; and when, with the promptness of *Baraduri*

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justice, they were condemned to be hanged, they confessed that it was they who had waylaid the *burra sahib* three days before at the rock, when only the fall carried him out of their reach; and then, baulked of their prey, they had resolved to get into his Camp and cut him down there, come what might. If they succeeded, all praise to Allah! if they failed, it was their *kismut* (fate).

Deeply was Jacobson moved at the recital of this plot on his life. Again that prayer of his mother! Ah!

* * * *

You parents who have sons and daughters exposed to the perils and the temptations of Indian life, follow them with your prayers, *for they need them;* follow them with pleadings, as Abraham followed Lot, and, if like his, you will prevail.

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An Indian Chaplain's Career.

"IN MEMORIAM."

THE life of an Indian Chaplain is by a too common mistake often considered to be one rather of worldly competence and idleness, than one tending to call for activity and zeal. Yet not only were Claudius Buchanan, Henry Martyn, Daniel Corrie, John Henry Pratt,—all more or less known to fame,—members of that body; but many more, whose labours though less conspicious, were not the less real. We can appeal to the two Missionary Societies of our Church to testify that scarcely a Mission in India but owes its origin, or its progress, to the earnest appeals and the sympathising co-operation of Chaplains. Henry Fisher was the "Father of the Meerut Mission" in 1815, and brought upon himself the grave censures of Government for his efforts at conversion. Not to instance more, many still living can doubtless recall the unflagging evangelising zeal of Jennings, who, while Chaplain there, was the founder of the now thriving Mission at Delhi, under

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the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and fell one of the first victims of the outbreak of the mutiny in that city in May, 1857, and that of Jay, the first Chaplain of Lahore, who originated the Punjab Mission of the Church Missionary Society.

The Chaplain of whom we would speak in this paper would not perhaps vie with these just named in a display of Missionary zeal; yet is he in no way unworthy to take his place beside them as illustrating the various gifts of the Spirit, according to the varying spheres of labour. James Parker Harris was essentially a *Soldiers' Chaplain*, and his position in Peshawur, one of the largest of our military stations in India, helped to call out and to develop those natural traits and powers especially needed for such a post.

His early ambition had been to enter the army, but the earnest desire of his father prevailed, and he consented to take Holy Orders; with this view he went to Oxford, matriculating at Brazenose, a college at that time figuring more highly in the cricket-field and on the river, and in all field sports, than in the schools. Here Harris gave full play to his tastes in all manly pursuits, and thus perhaps neglected those studies which, with his natural intellectual powers, would have placed him high in the class list. Still, even this form of training at Oxford, it will be seen, was not without its value in fitting him for his Indian career.

On his arrival in Calcutta, in 1854, he was sent

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into the Punjab, his destination being the extreme frontier station of Peshawur; and it proved to be one for which he was singularly suited. A very large European force, and an unhealthy station, supplied almost incessant calls upon him, and stimulated him to strain every nerve to meet the requirements of the sick and dying; his presence in the Hospitals and in the Regimental Schools was always welcome; his geniality of manner won all hearts, old and young; his ready sympathy and gentle tones made him acceptable to all; his manly bearing and his active habits had a special charm for the young officers, while his reverential spirit and grave remarks in season prevented their ever losing respect in familiarity, and made them always remember that their companion and friend was also their *pastor*. Many still living could no doubt testify to his peculiar fitness for such a post, and acknowledge the value of his ministrations to themselves.

Besides his more regular duties in the station, calls of a more trying character were sometimes made upon his energy, and even courage, which do not ordinarily fall to an Indian Chaplain's lot. Peshawur is protected by a line of advanced outposts on the frontier line, where small bodies of troops are placed. Here an occasional raid from a mountain tribe would break the monotony of garrison life, and sometimes an engagement would ensue with serious consequences. More than once was a messenger sent in to report an attack had been made, and some of the English

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wounded, and to request that a clergyman might at once go out to them. A ride of twenty miles or more across a dangerous country, where every bush or ravine might conceal an enemy, was an undertaking to make the heart of many a peace-loving Chaplain quail; but Harris was a soldier in heart as well as the true Soldier's Chaplain. His horsemanship too stood him in good stead: he would at once mount his horse, and accompanied by a native trooper as his guide, ride fearlessly off to the frontier fort, without even the protection of a revolver at his side for self-defence. Once, when entreated not to go so unarmed, his answer was worthy of one strong in the assurance that the Master, whose work he was upon, would have him in safe keeping.

After two years of faithful labour at Peshawur his health became so undermined by that local fever for which Peshawur and its valley are noted, that a change became necessary, and he spent the hot weather of 1856 at the neighbouring sanatarium of Murree in the hope of recruiting; but as the winter drew on it was pronounced by the medical men that a return to Peshawur would probably prove fatal to him. Lucknow was now vacant; and was offered him. He readily accepted it; and the close of 1856 saw him in that station, where he was joined by the Rev. J. Polehampton. Before six months had passed the Indian Mutiny had swept over the land; Lucknow, the capital of the recently annexed province of Oudh, naturally became a centre of disaffection,—indeed the

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chief focus of rebellion in that part of India. Here Harris and his no less courageous wife were among the last to obey the order to leave Cantonments and seek shelter in the Residency within the city. The Sunday evening before they did so, a "faithful few" were at the Service in the Cantonment Church; they were suddenly startled by the sound of firing close by; a heavy thunderstorm was raging at the time. "Several officers left the Church," wrote one who was present. "Harris went on with the prayers in a firm voice, though he thought, as we all did, that our last hour was near." It proved a false alarm, being only a *feu-de-joi* of the Mussulmans in honour of the new moon which brought to an end their long fast of the *Ramazán*. On the following Tuesday, however, it was announced that ladies and the European sick must no longer remain in the Cantonments. Harris accompanied his wife to the Residency; but for some weeks drove over on Sundays, and nearly daily, to Cantonments to visit and hold services for the officers and soldiers left there. However, on the 30th of June, after the disaster at Chinhut, the gates of the Residency closed for four and a half weary long months, save only when on the 26th of September they opened to admit the relieving force under the heroic Sir James Outram; to close again until the survivors of the garrison were rescued and removed by Sir Colin Campbell in the middle of November.

After the death of his colleague, Mr. Polehampton, on the 20th of July, Harris was the only English

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Chaplain (there was one Roman Catholic priest for those of that Communion). On him devolved the entire duties of the besieged garrison; how he performed them can only be duly appreciated by those who witnessed and benefited by his ministration.

From his being the only Church of England Clergyman present, a question was once raised whether the value of his life would not justify the same precaution being taken by him as was allowed to the Romish Priest. The cemetery in the Residency enclosure was much exposed, and, though the funerals were always performed in the darkest hours of night, the very *mussals* (flambeaux used for the bearers) served to draw down the enemy's fire on the men carrying the bier, who alone were allowed to accompany the corpse. It having been represented by the Roman Catholic Priest that that Church admitted of the more important portion of the Burial Service being performed in the hospital or the house, which rendered it less necessary that the priest should accompany the corpse to the grave, he was exempted from exposure to what was considered unnecessary danger; and it was thought that a similar precaution might be adopted in the case of the Church of England Chaplain; but the form of the English Burial Service being different, it was decided by the Officer commanding the garrison that the committal of the body to the earth must be performed at the grave. This danger Harris incurred night after night throughout the siege, never going to the cemetery without

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first bidding his wife "good-bye," feeling how doubtful it was if he should return alive. But this ordinary risk was aggravated when the little garrison had to mourn the loss of their brave, true Soldier-Statesman chief, Sir Henry Lawrence. That day the firing had been heavier and more incessant than ever; that night the native grave-diggers would not enter the cemetery. Harris himself helped to prepare the grave, and when the evening came, (to use his own words,) "It had been my happiness to be with him from the time his poor body was stricken, and mine was the honour of laying the body with my own hands in its last rough, blood-stained resting place, where, as he had requested, he was *buried with the men.*"

One anecdote, which was told to the writer by an eye-witness, will not be out of place here. Harris was probably the best "shot" in the garrison, though he very rarely indulged during his Indian career in what had been a favourite pastime in early life. One day he had gone up to one of the bastions of the Residency, and found the men suffering severely from the deadly aim of some concealed matchlock man. Harris's keen eye detected the man at a small narrow window in a native house, and at once pointed him out to the Officers on the bastion. Several unsuccessful attempts were made to hit him, when it was proposed to Harris to try his hand and "pick him off;" but he gravely and resolutely declined. "I have determined," he said, "that throughout the siege I myself will never attempt to take a life, except

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in the greatest extremity, and then only in self-defence.

Such was the Chaplain, who visited the sick and wounded, comforted the mourning, and buried the dead, carrying his own life in his hands, during that memorable siege; and yet when the first official report of that siege was written—while every other Department was belauded (and some undoubtedly with nobly earned and richly deserved acknowledgments), the services of the two Chaplains, one of whom had fallen at his post, were only mentioned with the slightest possible acknowledgment.

But brighter days came for Lucknow, and for the true-hearted Chaplain too, when Sir James Outram relieved the garrison and assumed the chief command. That "Bayard of the East," that true knight, *sans peur et sans reproche*, found in the generous, chivalrous devotion of Harris that with which he himself could claim sympathetic kinship, and seized the opportunity to right what he felt was a wrong. In his dispatch, written at the end of the year, he wrote: "From the Rev. J. P. Harris, Chaplain of the garrison, the sick and wounded received the most marked and personal kindness. His spiritual ministrations in the hospital were incessant; his Christian zeal and earnest philanthropy I have had constant opportunities of observing since my arrival in Lucknow, and but one testimony is borne to his exertions during the siege and to the personal bravery he displayed in hastening from house to house in pursuit of his sacred calling

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under the heaviest fire. Daily he had to read the Burial Service over members of the garrison, exposed to shot, shell, and musketry."

Nor did the recognition of his services cease here. Lord Canning, then Governor-General of India, in his General Order on the Siege of Lucknow, thus refers to his services: "His Lordship in Council desires especially to tender his warm thanks to the Rev. J. P. Harris for the personal courage displayed by that gentleman in the discharge of his sacred duties, and for the unremitting assiduity with which throughout the siege he sought to allay the sufferings and provide for the comfort of the sick and wounded." Such acknowledgments of faithful service at such hands far more than compensated for any pain which the former slight mention might have caused, especially with one "whose praise" was "not of men, but of God."

When, in November, 1857, the garrison was finally relieved and safely conveyed to Cawnpore and brought down the river to Allahabad, Harris, though with health seriously shaken by fatigue and privation, refused to avail himself of the "Sick-leave" which was urgently pressed upon him, though his return to England then, as one of the "Heroic Garrison," would certainly have earned preferment in England; but begged to be allowed to stay at Allahabad, to share with the Chaplain of the station, the heavy duties of the large force, now so greatly augmented by the addition of the Lucknow garrison. After some weeks

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actively spent here, Harris proceeded to the Hill Sanatarium of Dugshai, to enjoy a well-earned change and comparatively easy duty: but it was apparent that a further change was necessary, and after two years in the Himalayas, he took his furlough to England.

In the beginning of 1863 he returned to India, in recruited and seemingly robust health. The announcement of his intended return drew from Bishop Cotton in a letter to the writer (who was then in Calcutta), the following recognition of Harris's worth: "We must give him the very best Station possible; *he deserves anything that can be done for him.* Umritsur is about to become vacant. Offer it to him directly he lands, and have him gazetted to it at once; for I shall be importuned with applications for it."

In the middle of March he found himself in this favourite station, so picturesque, and generally considered so healthy. He was full of zeal and humble hope that years of usefulness might yet be granted to him among soldiers, whom he loved and by whom he was beloved; but a few weeks sufficed to show that the old malady, the Peshawur fever, intensified by the privations and trials of Lucknow, still had a too firm hold on his constitution. From May to July he struggled on, reluctant to leave his post of duty; but by that time his health had so utterly failed that he was peremptorily ordered off to the neighbouring Sanatarium of Dhurmsala. Here his disease assumed a dysenteric character, and it then

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became evident that nothing short of a voyage to England held out any hope of recovery. He was brought down to Calcutta in an emaciated state, put on board the *Agamemnon*, and as we watched him being lifted over the ship's side our hearts sadly misgave us that England was not THE HOME whither he was tending. After lingering for nearly six weeks he sank to rest on the eve of Good Friday, 1864, closing a life of rare unselfishness and devotion to his Lord's service with a death of rare Christian patience, gentleness, resignation, and trust in his Lord's merits and mediation—a faith unfeigned. The next day the sea closed over his corpse, and left those who mourn him to cling to a precious memory, full of hope that when the sea shall give up her dead he will be among those to receive that glorious greeting: "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

* * * * *

Homes,—Colleges,—Parishes of England,—lend to India more *such*, like minded, manly, earnest, devoted Chaplains!

DICKINSON, PRINTER, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE.

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